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IS BORIS LOSING IT?

**A BREXITEER
ON THE BRINK**

**BY JANE MERRICK
& BONNIE GREER**



HAVE LABOUR SEEN THE LIGHT?

**BY HEIDI ALEXANDER MP, ALISON MCGOVERN MP,
ALASTAIR CAMPBELL, MITCH BENN & MICHAEL WHITE**

PLUS MAN RAY ★ MICHAEL SCHUMACHER ★ JOHN STEINBECK ★ CAN

AGENDA

Richard Porritt



THIS WEEK'S BIG STORIES

Japanese businesses expect “clarity” over Brexit, a top diplomat said as Theresa May jetted off to the Far East.

Minister for public diplomacy at the Japanese embassy Shinichi Iida said his government would prefer Britain to stay in the European Union and will be “paying close attention” to negotiations. He added that Japan has a big stake in the process with 1,000 companies here, employing around 140,000 people in the UK. May might have hoped for a bit of a break from Brexit while she was in Japan on a trade and investment mission to see both Emperor Akihito and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. But alas, no. It seems she is going to face more tricky Brexit questions – especially if the Emperor and the PM are expecting “clarity”.

“First of all we settle the past before we look forward to the future,” said European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker as he delivered another rapier rebuke to Britain.

The EU has made it clear that before trade talks can begin, issues including the Irish border, the divorce bill and the rights of European citizens in the UK must be settled. And yet the position papers have just kept coming. Juncker said: “I did read, with the requisite attention, all the papers produced by Her Majesty’s Government and none of those is actually satisfactory. So there is still an enormous amount of issues which remain to be settled.”

Ouch. What does Number 10 have to say about this? “We have published a number of papers on a few specific themes. There are more papers to come in the coming weeks.”

Labour’s Brexit bombshell was welcomed by those who have struggled to explain the difference between their own stance and that of the Government. But not everyone is happy. Labour Leaver MP Graham Stringer had some tough words for Sir Keir Starmer: “MPs, if they are trying to undermine and sabotage a decision that was made by the people of this country in the referendum just over a year ago, then they will be seriously threatened, as will be democracy.” Labour prides itself on being a democratic party and with conference looming what better time to ask members what they think of Brexit?



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With just four weeks left until Germany goes to the polls, Angela Merkel cannot be accused of succumbing to a quick fix of populism.

She has defiantly said she was in the right in allowing migrants into Germany during the 2015 crisis and even claimed she would do the same thing again.

Writing in *Welt am Sonntag* Merkel said: “Germany acted humanely and correctly in a very difficult situation. It was a question of averting a humanitarian catastrophe.

“It was an emergency which none of us, including the people seeking safe haven, should ever experience again.”

Migration is becoming one of the main themes of the Bundestag election, with polling firms reporting it is a big issue on the doorstep. Merkel faced huge criticism after more than 890,000 migrants came to Germany in 2015. And her rival Martin Schulz is hoping to keep Merkel’s feet to the flames by warning another influx might be imminent.

Tensions continue to soar ahead of the unofficial Catalan independence vote planned for October 1.

Madrid already refuses to acknowledge the vote and now separatist politicians have vowed they will take immediate control of Catalonia’s borders if they are successful in the poll. A bill outlining the next steps if Catalans back independence “provides a legal framework for the period immediately after” and will automatically be applied, according to head of the Together For Yes group Lluís Corominas.

Exactly how Madrid responds if there is a vote to leave is unknown and officials will be hoping current polling – which has a No vote on almost 50% but with 10% still undecided – is borne out.

Norway’s economy is in good shape – the best since 2012 in fact.

But there is growing concern over the result of next month’s general election which could see any of a swathe of small political parties demanding influence – parties that include the hard-left Marxist Red. Economists fear the uncertainty of a new coalition could scupper the nation’s fiscal future.

There are at least 10 potential alternatives for minority or majority coalition governments making the outcome of the vote almost impossible to predict.

But the recent good news has seen the current centre right coalition eating away at the poll lead the opposition had built. Prime Minister Erna Solberg – perhaps the most right-wing leader in Norway’s recent history – will now look to cash in and become the first ever right of centre leader to win a second term.

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Bonnie Greer

Playwright,
Author,
Critic



Long before the internet was invented, the troll held our imaginations and encompassed our fears.

Here is one tale: A poor miller, in an attempt to make himself look big, lies to the king by telling him that his rather boring daughter can spin straw into gold. The king loves the idea and shuts her in a room with a spinning wheel, some straw, and tells her to get busy. Or else. When she is just about to give up, a troll appears. This creature, straw-coloured hair long and askew, quickly spins the straw into gold.

But he wants her nice necklace in return. The king is all in by now, and wants the gold trick repeated. The troll shows up to help the daughter and gold happens again.

The troll goes on to make bigger and bigger demands on her in exchange for his help when finally he asks for the big one: her first born. She begs and pleads with him and he finally gives her a break. It is this: if she can guess his name, she can keep her baby.

The daughter, now queen, wanders around in despair and panic until she comes upon the troll. He is dancing around a campfire, and boasting about himself. While singing his own name. She nails him and keeps her child. He stamps his foot so hard in rage that he kicks a hole in the earth. It swallows him up. And he's gone.

This, of course, is the classic Grimm fairy tale: the story of Rumpelstiltskin, who finally gets taken down because his victim says his name. But when will the centre right, here and in the US, finally say the name of their two troublemakers: Boris Johnson and Donald Trump. They of the troll-hair.

One of the ways to judge how much the right-of-centre press dominates public discourse is to observe the amount of obfuscation going on in covering up the real story: trouble on the right. But, gradually, the right wing mainstream press are discovering: something is wrong with Brexit.

Soon the BBC, its hostage and victim, will sound the alarm. But not before the troll of the right is named: Johnson. Theresa May has gone on record to say that she has "complete confidence" in the Foreign Secretary. This is, without doubt, the prelude to offering him the metaphorical pistol, a glass of whisky and access to the back garden.

He is being offered the opportunity to go before he is pushed. Staying in his place is costing her authority, and the governing party its credibility, but she cannot move against him. Right now, the right is facing its troll. And is trapped.

That Johnson has close to zero credibility in the foreign halls of power can be gauged from an alleged assessment from, of all places, the Trump State Department, given to the Times: "(The Americans) don't want to go anywhere near Boris because they think he's a joke... It's worse in Europe. There is not a single foreign minister there who takes him seriously."



Boris is AWOL on the world stages at a time of great danger and change. On the big issues and conflicts of the day he is – in effect – nowhere to be found.

Where is he in relation to Syria, a conflagration in which Britain could provide both literal and moral leadership? The UK sells arms to Saudi Arabia in vast quantities. The positive influence that Her Majesty's Government could wield – or try to wield – on that country's horrible war in Yemen could be immense. Iraq, Turkey, Russia... the list is long and tragic. And the UK... largely not there.

Then there is the matter of Trump: Troll of the Republican Party. He came for their first born: the White House... and got it. He plays on resentment, anger and fear. The perfect Grimm fairy tale.

Both men hold right-of-centre opinion in thrall. No one dare oppose them. The reason: any opponent could, like the king and the daughter/queen in Rumpelstiltskin, lose the gold. The fact that both Trump and Boris have found their respective parties a kind of retail opportunity for their brand, makes them the Rumpelstiltskins that must now be defeated. As with the Conservatives, the Republican Party is trapped by their troll.

Finally admitting to themselves in some quarters (what everyone else has known for the last two years) that Trump waged and won nothing less than a hostile takeover of their party, they are now faced with the question of how he can continue.

The right – now differentiated in the

Rumpelstiltskin from the fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm. Illustration by George Cruikshank in 1968

US between the 'Dirty Right', as exemplified by Charlottesville, and the 'Clean Right', as exemplified by the US Secretary of State, who said that "Trump speaks for himself" – has to now face a cold fact: Trump is not one of us.

Here in the UK, it is rapidly becoming apparent that the Theatre of The Absurd being played out in Brussels (creator of surrealism itself) is largely a result of an internal right-of-centre battle. Brexit is not the "rising tide that lifts all boats" as Leavers hope and state. It is becoming the exact opposite.

The euro is taking centre stage as – wait for it – a haven currency. It is rising above the almighty dollar and could be sinking the pound as the straw-haired trolls of the right continue their mayhem.

This uncertainty gives Labour an opportunity. If ideology (centrist vs. Corbynista; Blue Labour vs Momentum; Blairites vs. the entire Labour Party) can take a back seat for five minutes, the party just might win the next General Election. Corbyn can see the prize. Labour can bring down the government over Brexit and cause another election.

By allowing Keir Starmer, Labour's Shadow Brexit Secretary, to announce the party's new strategy over the Bank Holiday weekend, Corbyn has played a blinder. He has left Theresa May up the proverbial creek without a paddle.

The Prime Minister now faces possible defeat on her various Brexit Bills, if some Tory Remainers put country before party. And the Labour Party has rejected

what the right-of-centre commentariat now call an example of Henry Kissinger's doctrine of "constructive ambiguity". In doing so Labour will spare us the truly horrible sight of Corbyn and Johnson walking through the same lobby at voting time in the House Of Commons.

In the US, Troll Trump wastes no opportunity to call the leaders of the House and the Senate "fools". On the surface they appear to be flummoxed and silenced in the face of this onslaught.

But they are politicians. And Trump is not. We all may think that we detest politicians. But what's going on both here and in America is politico porn: the kind of stuff they love. It is the hunting and taking down of The Big Beast.

As Troll Trump feeds red meat to his dwindling base, the Republicans and Washington itself could imprison him in the Oval Office – until Robert Mueller, the special counsel investigating Russian links, gets close to his door. Then the Republicans could turn to 'One Of Us' – Mike Pence.

Here the mainstream press are signalling to the PM that Johnson has not only lost their patronage: he is endangering, by his absurdity, the supreme project: Brexit.

Labour now has become a coalition ranging from Soft Brexit to Remain. They're riding the wave. The right, as in the US, has been captured by the troll. Until they can say his name, that is.

■ See page 8 for Jane Merrick on the eclipsing of Boris Johnson

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Labour's gambit



MICHAEL WHITE ON HOW STARMER GAVE HOPE TO ENEMIES OF BREXIT

In *The Ferryman*, Jez Butterworth's dazzling play about Northern Ireland's Troubles, there's a wonderfully drawn character called Auntie Maggie, with whom the children of the Carney family all love to chat whenever the old lady drifts back into coherent focus. Most of the time she just sits in her armchair and is spoken of affectionately as "Maggie Faraway".

In an age of ever-receding mortality rates, few families nowadays don't have a Maggie Faraway among their kin or wider circle of friends, though plenty of oldies in their 90s and beyond remain mentally sharp, even if physically infirm. They just forget a lot of things they knew only recently – an hour ago, even. I'm getting a bit that way myself.

But what do we make of our shared family of Brexit Faraways, with the Theresa Faraways and the Boris Faraways who readily disavow recent positions on the European Court of Justice (ECJ) or the "go whistle" divorce settlement, views which they claimed to hold quite strongly, just a few weeks earlier? Back in Brussels on Bank Holiday Monday to resume his negotiations with Michel ("time passes quickly") Barnier, David Faraway whistles a more emollient tune now as the Frenchman reminds him that the clock is ticking towards March 29, 2019.

Only time will tell which of them is Brexit's Floyd Mayweather and which is Conor McGregor, the plucky mixed martial arts champion beaten in round 10 at Las Vegas, as all the experts (pause for hisses) predicted. But what of Brexit's experts? Those Faraway pundits who solemnly declared – more on wishful thinking than on any evidence – that the Chancellor, Philip Hammond, had been forced into line to support a Hard Brexit strategy? Two weeks later they are back denouncing him for perfidy.

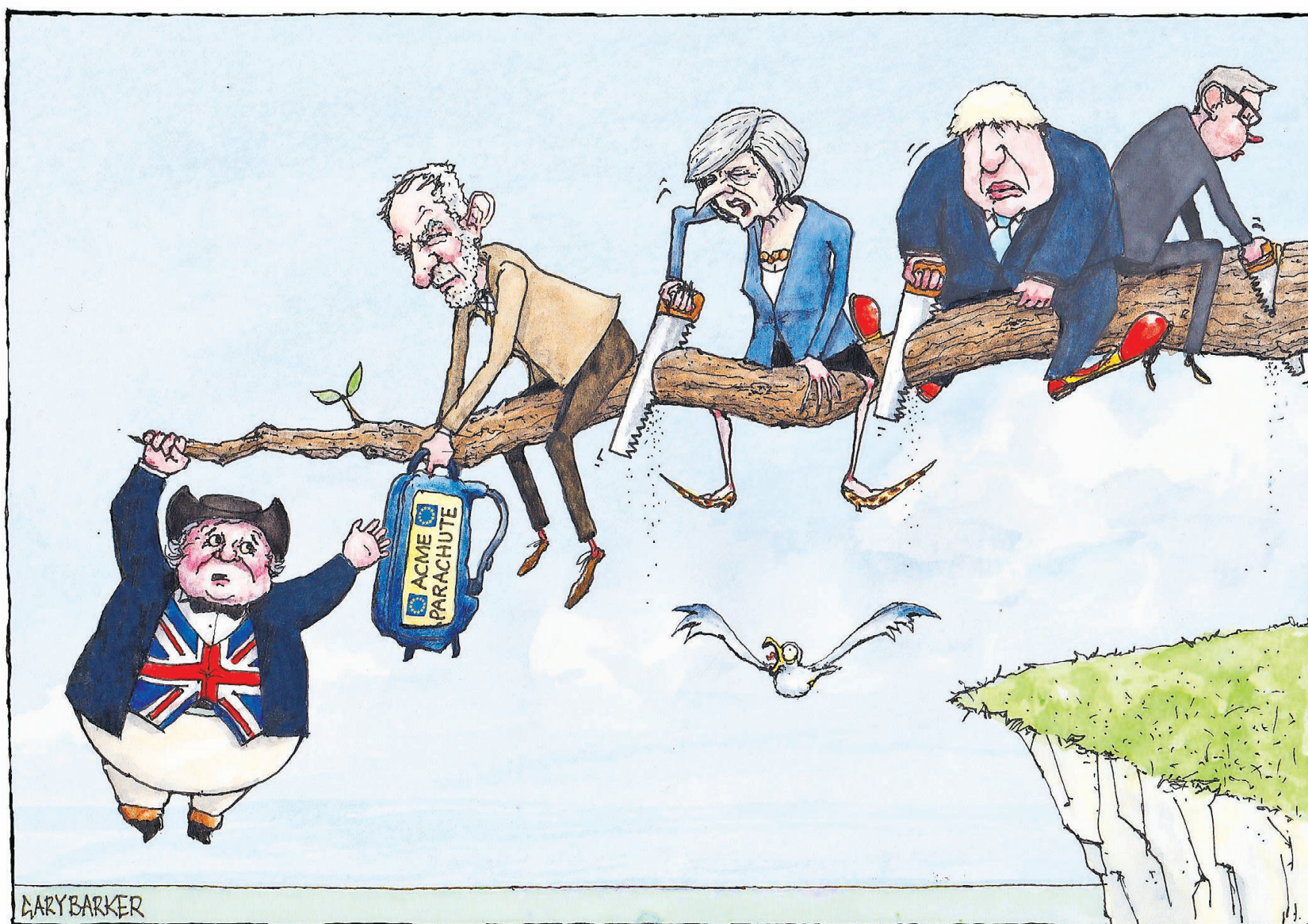
I know, I know, Brexit advocates don't have a monopoly on selective amnesia about past promises and predictions. George Osborne's instant recession didn't happen. If only he had access to a newspaper column to explain. As a Remain voter myself, one who opposed sterling entering the ill-designed eurozone, I remain astonished how little contrition there has been among those who badly miscalculated that experiment.

Their failure must have contributed to fateful Brexit disaffection among voters. Even the original Maggie (Maggie, Maggie) Faraway had the grace to admit she'd got the centralising Single European Act wrong in 1986, though she spoiled her confession in Bruges by blaming Brussels – "the Belgian Empire" – for deceiving her. Those cunning bureaucrats! They got her for it in the end.

But what about this week's Soft



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Brexit drama, the one in which Keir Starmer wrote a trenchant article for the *Observer* announcing that Labour will now back continued membership of the EU's single market and customs union during the transitional phase of the UK's departure. It would do so for an unspecified number of years – “as short as possible, but as long as is necessary” – possibly two to four.

Starmer's text and tone sounded brisk and realistic, acknowledging the complexities and the need to provide certainty to “protect jobs and the economy.” That's what business and Labour's paymaster trades unions want. German and Japanese business want it too, we were reminded this weekend as Theresa May headed towards fresh disappointment in Tokyo in the chimerical pursuit of new trade partners.

Sterling's 12% fall since Brexit – worse against the euro in late August – makes this a matter of urgency if UK exporters are to make up for lost market access across the Channel from whence sinister anti-Brexit chlorine gases emerge to poison innocent beachgoers at Birling Gap. If forensic analysis finds any US

chicken in that chlorine it could finish off Liam Fox's career.

Yet again devaluation has not yet delivered the promised export boost to compensate for higher import costs in the post-Brexit production chain. It still might, we have Cardiff University's Professor Patrick Minford's word for it. But it did not the last time this tired panacea was promoted, which was as recently as the pound's descent after the financial crash of 2008.

Significantly the Shadow Brexit Secretary unveiled the new policy without his party leader casually disowning it on his next TV appearance, which happened to come along the following morning. Corbynite statesmanship or what? Donald Trump could not have managed such a sustained burst of consistency. The deal has held all week. Touch wood.

Does Labour's apparent change amount to much? Only if Jeremy Corbyn really is committed to it and John McDonnell, his shadow chancellor and elected consigliere, is willing to go along with the deal. They're both quite big “ifs” even for a silly season story. Corbyn allies

brief the media that the new Soft Brexit policy is mere clarification of the existing position, but it isn't. Only a few weeks ago, Seumas Milne was explaining privately that Labour couldn't commit to remaining in the single market because the single market is the EU. Corbyn said so in similar terms on TV. So did McDonnell.

Starmer's deal led BBC news bulletins for half a hot August day but was quickly relegated to inside pages by both Remain and Leave newspapers – those who welcomed Labour's “Brexit politics realism” like the *FT* (pause for hisses) and *Guardian*, as well as by those who deplored it. “Cynical Labour does yet another Brexit flip-flop,” declared the Daily Dacre, which went quickly into betrayal mode.

Whether the *FT*'s or the *Mail*'s interpretation proves right in strategic terms, I suspect that tactically they're both right. Yes, saintly and patient, Sir Keir deserves a round of applause and new pair of long trousers for a grown-up piece of work. The Shadow Brexit secretary has racked up a huge phone bill persuading senior colleagues that their

party deserves a better policy on the great domestic issue of our times than what Faraway Davis called “constructive ambiguity”.

Not that Labour's own position since the June 23 vote has been heroic. Mostly confused and confusing (do you remember that Corbyn initially called for an immediate triggering of Article 50?), it evolved into calculated ambiguity designed to Hoover up the votes of both Glastonbury Remainers and gnarled defectors to UKIP in neglected northern pit villages on general election day. It has been Corbynism's most sophisticated bit of political manoeuvring so far.

So yes, I think, the *Mail*'s accusation of cynicism deserves acknowledgment too. Corbyn nominally abandoned his lifelong commitment to Bennite europhobia (Tony Benn himself had long since switched sides) ahead of the 2016 referendum because he was under strong pressure from the then-Shadow Cabinet to adhere to what was agreed party policy. It had been endorsed by the unions and

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From page 15

the party activists as well as by most Labour MPs. Isn't that enough for you, Jeremy?

It proved to be only grudgingly. The leader's referendum campaign swing made little impact compared with his Pied Piper of Islington tour in the general election a year later. But those who make a career out of parading their consciences while ducking tough decisions – Barbara Castle once accused perpetual rebel, Michael Foot, of growing soft on a “diet of soft options” – can be far more blatant in their moral selectivity than the Blairite Tory scum of Corbynite legend.

That talent has again been highlighted during the summer recess for anyone with eyes to see. Faced with the need to condemn violent allies – in Caracas and Charlottesville – Trump and Corbyn opted to condemn “both sides” – Faced with Sarah Champion's condemnation of predatory sexual conspiracy by British Pakistani men, Jeremy again fell back on moral equivalence: white blokes do it too. Yes, but that's not the issue, Jez.

So the *Mail* and other Brexit papers were quick to remind their readers that as recently as June 29 – not long ago even in the Faraway world we now inhabit – Corbyn sacked three shadow ministers, Andy Slaughter, Ruth Cadbury and Catherine West, for joining 46 other Labour MPs, plus assorted Nationalists and Green Caroline Lucas, in backing a Lib Dem amendment on the Queen's Speech.

What did the amendment (which garnered 101 votes overall) do? It urged continued UK membership of the single market and customs union. Labour MPs had been told to abstain.

All right, I can see that continued single market membership, Vince Cable's position, is not the same as transitional membership, which is Starmer's. Former Shadow Business Secretary and fallen rising star, Chuka Umunna, who is battling to redeem himself, was a party to the Lib Dem effort and welcomed Starmer's statement as “a significant moment in the debate”. So did Lord Mandelson of Foy and Hartlepool. John Mann, Labour MP for Bassetlaw and an old bruiser who can usually be relied on to bark truculently up the wrong tree, did not. Nor did Birkenhead's Frank Field, Manchester Blackley's Graham Stringer or Kate Hoey, DUP-Labour MP for Vauxhall-on-Thames, all Brexit stalwarts.

The new Starmer doctrine amounts to a betrayal of thousands of Labour voters in northern working class seats who voted on June 23 to regain control of immigration, explained doughty old duffer, John Mann, though evidence of the damage to the economy from our looming loss of skilled EU workers grows by the day. I was in Yorkshire, Cumbria and Lancashire last week – and without trying to do so encountered energetic East European workers in all three.

Mann's constituency – whose Nottinghamshire miners worked through the 1983-4 strike – suffered pit closures, but its local unemployment claimant count today is below 3%. Who will care for Mann (57) if he ever has to go into a home for cranky ex-MPs? It turns out that ex-Home Secretary May's obsession with foreign student overstay may have been based on faulty port checks too. So they won't look after you either, John.



Skilfully handled, Labour's new clarity now provides an opportunity to exert serious leverage on Theresa Faraway's minority government, working in cooperation with the Lib Dems, SNP, Plaid Cymru, Sinn Féin (whoops, no, they stay away), Green Caroline and those Conservative MPs with the guts to stand up to May's recuperating leadership, still on the high dependency ward. The first test comes next week when parliament returns and MPs vote on the second reading of the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill. There will be other opportunities for backbenchers – and for peers – to flex their muscles as the autumn winds on and minister Davis exchanges more tinny “time to get serious” rhetoric with M Barnier and his masters at the European Council – who must decide in October whether “sufficient progress” has been made on the divorce (citizen rights, the Irish border and the cash) to warrant talks on the future EU-UK partnership.

By then, the German elections will be over and – unless Germany has a real Corbyn Crush for Martin Schulz, which I strongly doubt – Chancellor Merkel will be confirmed in power for a fourth term. It will end in tears for her, as it always does eventually. But the stability she offers is the best sheet anchor available in the midst of Hurricane Trump. Will the Emperor Macron have worked out how to govern – Trump has no real interest – by then. We must fervently hope so.

So the autumn will not be dull and Starmer, who was jealously deprived of staff support by Camp Corbyn, will have a chance to shine in debate. Does that remind you of any similar situation? Me too. In the rolling crisis over the 1992 Maastricht Treaty over which John Major negotiated admirable opt-outs (and one or two less admirable ones), notably on eurozone membership, Neil Kinnock's

shadow chancellor, John Smith, also took his chances to show what a clever lawyer and political operator he was, despite that misjudged shadow budget.

After Kinnock lost the April election Smith was rewarded with a 91.1% victory over the eurosceptic Bryan Gould in the subsequent leadership contest. That was a much bigger mandate, incidentally, than is routinely claimed for you-know-who by some who should know better, but probably don't. Jeremy himself was in parliament during Smith's ascendancy, but was never an assiduous MP on EU matters and probably too busy not supporting his leader to notice.

Apart from the obvious flaw – Labour is not actually in power – the Starmer Strategy faces many circling foes. Pro-EU Tory and ex-business minister, Anna Soubry, the thinking woman's Ken Clarke, also welcomed his move, while expressing scepticism about Camp Corbyn's cynical and half-hearted motives in going along with it. Emily Thornberry, shadow foreign secretary and Jez's neighbour inside the Islington laager, is said to be on board.

But she was publicly tipped as the next party leader by Unite's Len McCluskey the other day. Ed Miliband, Jeremy Corbyn and now Emily Thornberry, Len is going to get it right one day, though not, it appears, next time. Alas, leadership ambitions do bad things to otherwise sensible people. Who can forget Andrea Leadsom's heady moment? Actually, we all can, but not quite yet. Another potential worry in the amour propre department is that Dr Sir Vince may get restless now that Starmer has repositioned Labour on a slice of Lib Dem turf. He is a clever fellow, as he would readily admit under torture, and faces little weighty opposition within the depleted Lib Dem ranks. Nick Clegg is no longer an MP.

The more damaging charge comes from the opposite direction. It comes from Labour dissidents, as well as the Hard Brexit crowd in the Tory ranks and on Fleet St, namely that Starmer's real goal is to keep Britain in the EU one way or another – thereby “betraying” the 37% of UK voters who voted for Brexit on June 23. Corbyn Labour is showing itself “as contemptuous of ordinary voters as Tony Blair's New Labour was,” thundered Peter Faraway Osborne in the *Mail* – where he was praising Corbyn's integrity just a few weeks ago. An accompanying editorial nearly gave itself a stroke.

Though Continuity Remainers (in the jargon) may pine for that to happen, Starmer's statement explicitly ruled out the Closet Remain explanation, though his pledge to seek the benefits of single market/customs union membership – and pay money for doing so – is a hard circle to square outside the EU. Never mind, people who can believe Liam Fox can outsmart Phil Hammond or that Boris (“where is he?”) Johnson is trustworthy, are capable of quite a lot of mental gymnastics in search of reassuring confirmation bias.

The “Undercover Economist” Tim Harford, rightly calls the Fox Up/Hammond Down approach an example zero-sum thinking. Populists love zero-sum thinking, but as President Trump routinely demonstrates in threatening a trade war with China or a nuclear one with North Korea, there's always an obvious flaw: contrary to zero-sum thinking, we get hurt too. Northern and Midlands Labour MPs who protest that

their constituencies voted for Brexit – as many did – conveniently elide an inconvenient point. There may have been a majority for Brexit in their constituencies, but it was a cross-party majority, not a Labour one.

So there is room for manoeuvre if Labour can show sustained, confident and coherent leadership, one that seeks both to explain and to reassure. John Mann's constituents did not vote to be poorer or to have worse public services on either referendum or election day. That means addressing the concerns of people you don't necessarily like or approve of, a talent Corbyn has never shown much interest in developing.

Likewise the Tories, likewise the EU's own negotiators for that matter. When David Davis complains that it's hard to resolve the Irish border issue – our only land border with the EU – without knowing the rough shape of the UK's future relationship with the 27, he is making a valid point. He does when he seeks the legal basis for the EU's draft calculation on our Brexit bill (100 billion euros gross, 60 billion net?) – he'd like to see the maths.

Barnier would like to see his own guesstimate, conspicuously absent from the August series of position papers. They hold most of the aces, but need our budget contributions, they need our trade. Davis may be insufferably cocky, but he's not daft: that's why he's tasked with the job.

So both sides are engaged in negotiation, testing each other's resolve and priorities, much as Floyd Mayweather and Conor McGregor did in the opening rounds on Saturday. McGregor started well, won early rounds, but Mayweather's experience and lethal skill set prevailed in the end. Who's bluffing who – and how?

The *Daily Telegraph* reports that the Macron Élysée is getting impatient with Barnier's lack of progress and has floated a compromise on the cash – 10 billion euros a year during a three-year transition, staged under EU law, not some bespoke arrangement of the Efta variety previously discussed in this column. Contingent liabilities and pensions would add more. So would a greater degree of Starmer-style market/customs access.

French officials deny the *Telegraph's* report. But just because something is in the *Telegraph* and denied by French officials does not make it untrue. It is many years since Bent Bananas Boris was the paper's mendacious correspondent in Brussels. In a *Guardian* column, Charles Grant, director of the Centre for European Reform think tank and no Borisite, confirms similar thinking among informed EU officials. But they are being blocked by what Grant calls “hardliners” on both sides – by which he means Brexit fundamentalists in Britain and cash-strapped EU states which don't want to have to fill the budget hole left by Brexit. They have angry voters too.

With luck, grown-up compromise will prevail in the end because the zero-sum cliff will hurt all. In the end it will be re-elected chancellor Merkel and her new best friend forever, King Emmanuel of France, who will decide, not Jean-Claude Juncker, irritable and over-promoted leader of Luxembourg county council. But a deal will require courage, compromise and leadership at the London end too. Are you ready Theresa Faraway? You too, Faraway Jeremy?

David Davis, right, and the EU's chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier arrive to address the media prior to the third round of Brexit talks in Brussels, Belgium on August 28
Photo: Xinhua/Ye Pingfan

We should not let sleeping giants stand

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown



The special relationship is alive and kicking. White Anglo-American establishments are always there for each other when times get rough, like that bridge over troubled waters.

In 1776, the new nation declared itself independent from the old. But like the conflicted fathers and sons in Homer's epics, the kinship grew stronger. The US and UK are always allies in every war, however misguided and destructive. Trump, volatile, unstable, is going back into Afghanistan. The UK jumps up and goes there with him. With culture conflicts too, the majority of influential Brits stand shoulder to shoulder with their American blood brothers. They did over last year's (non-violent) protests in Oxford over the imperial chauvinist Cecil Rhodes and again during recent eruptions over memorials to the Confederacy in the USA which brought out vile and violent white supremacists.

The script is the same and entirely predictable. History is sacrosanct and its symbols should be preserved forever. The civilized try to understand history, learn from it; barbarians destroy the bad past and repeat it. These solemn intonements are made by politicians, hacks, public intellectuals and academics. They dissemble. And are duplicitous. Or obtuse.

A consensus is manufactured. Even our liberal newspapers have been full of disgruntled readers who want to let sleeping giants stand, who believe that some successful slavers carved in stone knew that enslavement was evil, who think talking and shouting about Rhodes and Confederacy statues is creating social discord. Afua Hirsch, a challenging and thoughtful British journalist, of Ghanaian/Jewish heritage wrote a column on Britain's slave traders and their defenders whose statues are all over the land. Nelson is one of them. She called for the removal of the dishonourable men because they 'energise' neo-fascists. Outrage swelled up, poured out, burst the banks of rationality. Hirsch was a "stupid woman" who knows nothing. She is dangerous because she wants overthrow "glorious British heroes and the past". She is attacking our most valuable 'freedoms'. She should be made to shut up. And so on. This is how truths get flooded over.

Within living memory, both these self-righteous states have actively wrecked monuments and erased history. In March 2003, British tanks demolished two of Saddam Hussein's statues in Basra. More



dramatically, that April, American soldiers encouraged a few Iraqis to help them topple a huge Saddam statue in Baghdad. This became a symbol of Iraqi support for the illegal war. Much of it was fixed and used for propaganda purposes. I do not remember private school history

Nelson's Column, Cecil Rhodes, Saddam Hussein
Photos: PA

boys damning the vandalism then. They stood by too, as, by 1993, Poland had brought down 2,000 statues of communist-era figures. The government is carrying on with this political cleansing. (See *Post-Communist Poland: Contested Pasts and Future Identities*, by Ewa Ochman,

Routledge, 2013). Ukraine got rid of 2,300 statues of Lenin at the end of communism. This stirred no protective instincts in western historians or politicians. So forgive me if I don't take seriously their preciousness over Rhodes, Nelson or the Confederate champions. Selective moral outrage is simply special pleading.

Monuments in public spheres are there to impart messages and complex stories. The inert stone object gives off waves, emotional energies. Nelson's statue in Trafalgar Square is an abiding statement of British victory which today freshly enlivens xenophobic Brexiters.

There is a black sailor at the foot of the column too, close to Nelson. That proves we Britons of colour have long been here, that this is our country. But the admiral ardently supported the slave trade, which complicates matters. Nelson can keep towering over me and the pigeons in London's most famous site. But people like me cannot and will not buy into the triumphalism. Millions of Americans and Britons cannot bear such realities.

Knowledge to them means disempowerment because it forces them to question their cherished myths and fables, all of which reassure them that white is right and always mighty. They now face mounting rebellions against set narratives. Jewish groups in New York are demanding that the statue of Peter Stuyvesant, the anti-Semite, first mayor of New York City be removed.

Christopher Columbus may go the same way, much to the chagrin of Italians. Here, after campaigning by artists and anti-racists, the Colston Concert hall in Bristol is dropping the name of rich slave trader, Edward Colston. His statue still stands. For now. Richard Eddy, a Tory bigwig in the city, is appalled that this "great Bristolean" and history have been betrayed by "forces of historically illiterate political correctness". Do these people hear themselves? Who is really politically illiterate?

I don't think we should destroy these irksome monuments. But they can't be left there without challenge. Germans have kept Nazi sites and turned them into statements of regret and forewarning. The Gestapo HQ in Berlin is now a museum where millions go to learn about evil. This is the example Anglo-Americans need to follow. Yes, the Hun has much to teach those who beat them in the war.

Traditionalists who cling to the status quo need to know that insurrectionists are not giving up any time soon. As David Olusoga, the black British historian, writes: "This, ultimately, is a battle of ideas, political struggles in which versions of the past that have long gone uncontested." Lies, lies and hypocrisies will no longer be accepted. Brave new world.

AGENDA

Boris Johnson has long been loathed by Remainers. Now, even the Tory grassroots are turning on him. JANE MERRICK reports on the Foreign Secretary's waning star



This summer, the United States wasn't the only country to witness a total eclipse.

In the UK, another golden figure was blocked out – and this time it could be permanent. Boris Johnson, for years the star of the Conservative Party's grassroots, the People's Foreign Secretary and hot favourite of rubber chicken-fed activists, was eclipsed by someone just as eccentric and cultish – Jacob Rees-Mogg.

Conservative Home's latest leadership survey, which has been testing the views of rank and file Tory members for more than a decade and is seen as the most accurate barometer of grassroots affiliations, showed Johnson's personal rating has slipped dramatically. Rees-Mogg was not even offered as a choice in the survey but so many people put his name under "other" that he would have beaten the Foreign Secretary into third place.

This eclipse seems set to continue into the Tory party conference in Manchester in October. Every year since 2005, Johnson has been the star attraction at the conference, trailed by a mob of television cameras, journalists and keen party members wherever he went. Since 2007, his main platform speech has packed out the conference hall, the competition for seats rivalled only by that for his party leader's closing address. This year in Manchester, however, the anticipation is all for Rees-Mogg – even if his top billing will be on the conference fringe.

'Moggmentum' began over the summer recess and was fuelled by stories that he was considering a bid for leader next time around. The speculation was not dimmed when the backbench Tory traditionalist, asked if he might stand for leader, said: "I wouldn't put any money on it" – the sort of falsely modest non-denial denial that might have come from Johnson's mouth.

Is the realisation that he is no longer the darling of the Tory grassroots causing the Foreign Secretary to have some sort of crisis of confidence? There have been reports, from anonymous "allies", of Johnson's "odd" behaviour, leading to speculation that he is ready to quit his job. When he travelled to Libya last week, the Foreign Secretary seemed to lack his normal vigour and delivered a rueful swipe at Theresa May over her reckless election campaign.

Criticism of his approach to one of the great offices of state has intensified. In a blistering attack in the *Evening Standard*, Lord Kerr of Kinlochard, the former head of the diplomatic service and ex-ambassador to the US and EU, accused Johnson of "failures to win friends" around the world – including angering the Germans over his use of the word "liberation" to describe Brexit. Lord Kerr said the Foreign Secretary had failed to set out Britain's post-Brexit role in Europe and the world, asking: "Why, though so damagingly voluble on others'



business, is he so silent about his own?"

In the *Times* this week, the columnist Rachel Sylvester said while in the US over the summer hedge fund managers, tech entrepreneurs and political strategists asked her: "Why has your prime minister appointed a fool as foreign secretary?" and reported that Foreign Office civil servants were so exasperated at his lack of discipline they had started asking Johnson's deputy, Alan Duncan, to make decisions instead.

When May became Prime Minister 14 months ago, Johnson's appointment as Foreign Secretary was the surprise move of her first reshuffle, particularly as his partner-in-Brexit Michael Gove was so brutally sacked. To give Boris one of the most senior positions in the Cabinet, a historic office of state, when he would have felt lucky to have been given DCMS, was intensely flattering.

But as previous inhabitants of Carlton Gardens have found, being Foreign

Secretary is a lonely job, detached from the gossip of Westminster and one from which it is difficult to drum up support for a leadership campaign in the Commons tea rooms. Not since James Callaghan in 1976 has a Foreign Secretary gone straight into the office of Prime Minister or leader of their party (John Major held the post for three months in 1989 but was Chancellor for a year before succeeding Margaret Thatcher). As Foreign Secretary for three years before the 2010 Labour leadership contest, David Miliband arguably failed to see his brother Ed, who spent weeks chatting to Labour MPs over coffee in Portcullis House, as the dark horse candidate.

Even with the increasing use by Tory MPs of WhatsApp, a virtual tea room of plotting and outlet of dissatisfaction with the Prime Minister, it is difficult to gauge the mood of backbench Tories when staring out of the window of a BAE146 or sitting in the stale environment of a

windowless room in Brussels. It would be unsurprising if Johnson wished for another role – but after Foreign Secretary there are few places to go: apart from Prime Minister, only Chancellor would be a promotion. The thought of Johnson being responsible for the nation's finances will send shivers down the spine of Treasury officials.

In 2012, when the then London mayor's popularity was surging off the back of the Olympics, his former editor Charles Moore wrote in the *Spectator* that Johnson was a "lazy workaholic": prolific in output but sloppy on detail. This approach has stayed with him in government. A Whitehall official describes the exasperation of trying to cut through the Foreign Secretary's "bluster" and get him to focus. He has what is described as the "restlessness and flibbertigibbetness of the journalist" which sets on edge the teeth of the drily cautious mandarin.

Photos: Getty/PA



alarm, Johnson tweeted that he was “outraged at reckless provocation by #NorthKorea. Strongly condemn latest illegal missile launch by #DPRK”. But surely no one takes seriously the idea that the Foreign Secretary can be the man to tread delicately into the theatre of Pyongyang’s trigger-happy paranoia.

Johnson has clearly tried to shake off his image of a celebrity buffoon and appear more statesmanlike. Fresh from his trip to Libya last week, the Foreign Secretary struck a remarkably serious tone in a Radio 4 *Today* interview. For next month’s Tory party conference speech, which is being written in part by the former *Daily Telegraph* foreign correspondent and international specialist David Blair, Johnson is expected to be statesmanlike and studiously loyal to the Prime Minister.

This is not just about the national interest but his own self-interest: May is being urged to replace Johnson with Michael Gove, recently brought out of exile into the Cabinet as Environment Secretary. From the point of view of Gove’s supporters, he has both the journalist’s eye for a headline but also the academic obsession with detail. Gove has made an impact in every Cabinet job he has held, and would know how to bring the historian’s sensitivity to talks with European partners. He has, say supporters, stronger links than Johnson with the Trump White House – having secured the first non-US interview with the president after his election victory.

Despite their shared responsibility for the Leave campaign, Johnson’s prominence has also made him the lightning conductor for public anger over Brexit. Both Johnson and Gove are to blame for the misleading claim of £350m a week for the NHS – but the Foreign Secretary has taken most of the heat. Is it better for Johnson to be seen as a cynical liar than a hapless buffoon? Surely it depends on who the electorate is.

Downing Street denied reports last weekend that the Prime Minister has told MPs she is planning to stand down by September 2019, but an exit date well before the next election certainly helps to calm down talk of a leadership contest in the run-up to what is going to be a difficult party conference for May after her electoral disaster in June. Nevertheless, Tory MPs are perennially obsessed with leadership speculation. And while Johnson has always enjoyed popular support among grassroots (until this summer at least), he does not have a substantial following among MPs.

Despite this, many who know Johnson believe he has not given up ambitions of leading the Conservative Party. His biographer, Andrew Gimson, said he was “100% convinced” Johnson still wants the top job, adding: “It is just in his nature. When he was on *Desert Island Discs* he said all politicians were like crazed wasps in a jam jar, each individually convinced that they’re going to make it, and he is still that crazed wasp in a jam jar. He cannot help himself from thinking about how the cards will fall, or rather, how to encourage the cards to fall right so that he gets it.”

Yet with his support waning among Tory grassroots and criticism mounting abroad, Johnson might find it impossible to get the cards to fall in his favour.

■ Jane Merrick is a freelance journalist and columnist; follow her @janemerrick23

But some don’t see this as a downside: one who knows the Foreign Secretary well says this journalistic quality of being able to change with the prevailing mood, of turning on a sixpence, could work well in the closing stages of Brexit negotiations when quick thinking, rather than the glacial pace of officialdom, is needed. Johnson is still a gifted orator who can win over a crowd. If the detail is lacking, the former journalist can still deliver a headline.

Yet accusations of a lack of discretion and diplomacy are more damaging, particularly when Britain is trying to win support for new trade deals around the world after Brexit. Having insulted the Germans by talk of “liberation” for the UK from Europe at a speech in Munich earlier this year, Johnson annoyed the French by letting slip their plan for UN peace talks in Libya. On Monday night, when North Korea launched a missile over Japan to widespread international

Time for students to make voices heard

All those angry, or just anxious, about Brexit have an opportunity to get this tone-deaf government to take notice, with a rally in Manchester on October 1. Student CAMERON BROOME explains why young people must take this chance



I’ll be honest. Until recently, I had been reluctant to back anything that had “stop Brexit” attached to it. With a turnout of 72%, 33 million people voted in the EU referendum in what was one of the largest exercises of British democracy.

It politicised the nation. People who had grown apathetic and hadn’t voted in years (or in some cases had never voted) found themselves energised. Regardless of your views, that is something that we should all celebrate.

I worried that opposing Brexit after the event would exacerbate apathy and turn these newly politicised voters away again. Political debate is as polarised as ever, and stalling Brexit, I feared, could add more poison.

Two things changed my mind. First, what is becoming increasingly clear about Brexit is that nothing is clear at all. Well, we are clear the £350m a week for the NHS is not coming. But beyond that, none of the vital questions are settled.

Second, the post referendum debate has made me realise that democracy must never stop. In the same way that after general elections the opposition has a duty to hold the government to account, the British people have a duty to hold the government to account over Brexit.

That is why Brexit sceptics – young or old – should turn out on October 1 and attend the Stop Brexit march in Manchester during the Conservative Party Conference. It is an opportunity for anyone who is concerned, angry or anxious about Brexit to send a strong message to the government: this debate is not over and that the fears of the British public must be heard. I am not coming at this as a hardcore Remainer: I understand the frustrations of Brexiteers, can see why they just want to get on with it. I also reject the claims that Leave voters were all ill-informed, misled or stupid.

However, my point is that if you are concerned, now is the time to make your voice heard. In two years time, it will be too late. Speak now or forever hold your peace (or not, as the case may be).

Brexiteers should fully support the right to demonstrate too; failure to do so will give Remain supporters the opportunity to argue that they were ignored. Indeed one of the worst of Theresa May’s failings has been to behave as though the only votes that mattered were those of the 52%.

As a student, I am particularly concerned about the impact Brexit will have on our universities – many of which are the best in the world. Being a member of the EU has benefited them; this global success could be jeopardised.

Significantly, 16-18 year olds – unlike in the Scottish independence referendum – were excluded from the EU referendum. The sense of an older generation working against the interests of the young was one of the most insidious of the many divisions opened by the vote. YouGov data suggests that 71% of 18-24 year olds backed Remain. If 16-18 year olds had been allowed to vote, the likelihood is that they would have backed Remain in similar proportion. With 1.46 million people aged 16-18, the outcome could have been very different if those whose future is most affected had been allowed fully to participate. The Tory government gathering in Manchester needs to hear their voice.

The biggest developmental challenges of the 21st century – be that global economic challenges, climate change, migration, cyber-crime, terrorism, labour struggles – might be diverse but they all have one thing in common: they are cross-border, not self-contained within imaginary political borders. To tackle these cross-border challenges, we need cross-border collaboration. With our European Union allies, we have shared culture, history and values, and we should never take for granted the peace that the EU has arguably helped to preserve.

No one can claim the EU referendum result was conclusive. 16.1 million voted for Remain, and were fairly united in what they wanted. With Leave, there was no ‘one’ path and voters had very different Brexit visions. And while we should be sceptical about polls, Leavers can hardly claim the result was a resounding success when, for example, a recently-published poll has put Remain on 43%, Leave at 36%. I think if the pollsters asked people if they were anxious, angry or concerned about Brexit, it would be landslide time.

“You may say I am a dreamer — I am not the only one” said Donald Tusk, quoting John Lennon when asked about the possibility of Britain staying in the EU.

Arguably, this is a signal – that a door is open should Britain change its mind.

Brexit or no Brexit, the EU is not perfect. But the election of President Macron in France has offered renewed hope of genuine reform. Similarly, the Dutch election result, in which Mark Rutte saw off a challenge from Geert Wilders, suggests that the sweeping tide of populism can be stopped.

The Manchester march is an opportunity for anyone anxious, angry or concerned about Brexit to make their voice heard by the government. For students, in particular, it is an opportunity to help ensure that we are not further marginalised from decisions which will affect us for the rest of our lives.

■ Cameron Broome, aged 20, is a geography student at the University of Manchester and head news editor of The Mancunion, Britain’s biggest student newspaper

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Alastair Campbell

Editor-at-Large



En même temps... I am guessing many of you know, without resorting to Google Translate, that it means 'at the same time'.

In France, however, it has taken on a political as well as a literal significance, because of Emmanuel Macron's heavy use of the phrase during his audacious bid for the Elysée Palace. It is not quite in the league of 'build a wall, drain the swamp, lock her up,' or even our very own 'take back control,' but say *en même temps* with a slight raise of the eyebrow, and people know you are having a bit of a dig at Macron. A soon to be published new book on him, by Sciences Po University President Olivier Duhamel, is called, simply, *Macron, et en même temps*.

During the campaign, it was part of his attraction, the ability to admit that some problems were too complicated to fit into a neat little tweet, the seeming intellectual limit of Donald Trump; the ability also to accept that even as he stated a position with conviction, he could immediately see there might be other views, and assess them as part of an overall argument. The satirists and the cynics were beginning to get into him over *en même temps* even before he won. Now, as the poetry of campaigning is translated into the hard graft of government, it is being seen by the public more generally as a negative, a sign that things they liked when choosing him are now reasons to tick the 'dissatisfied' box in the polls that have long played too big a role in French political life.

The French have something of a habit of voting for change in theory, and then turning against the change when it comes in practice. During the campaign, they perhaps wanted him to be a little bit 'all things to all men', so that they could invest in him the hopes they had for themselves. Having bought the idea of complexity, now they want simplicity, and on their terms. It is not easy being a political leader in the 'I know what I want and I want it now' age of instant

We are leaving, OK? En même temps, maybe we won't ...



shopping, instant communication, instant gratification. When do you ever see the phrase 'at the same time' in a tweet? Yet the challenges of the modern world are unutterably complex, and today's leaders seem to have more of them on their plate than many previous generations, what with inequality, migration, climate change, terrorism, robotics and artificial intelligence presenting many opportunities and yet, *en même temps* so many threats to people's jobs, living standards, communities. Then throw Brexit into that mix...

So if we come back across the Channel, and we watch our own politicians struggle to make sense of Brexit, what we see is the struggle to express simply and

clearly, decisions which are far from simple, on issues which are far from clear.

The country voted to leave the EU. *En même temps*, as Philip Hammond has consistently tried to point out, we did not vote to make ourselves poorer. As Chancellor, he is duty bound, surely, to point out the economic risks of Brexit, even while trying to deliver on the outcome of the referendum.

The country voted to leave the EU. *En même temps*, not least because of the wretched nature of the campaign, we did so amid a fog of lies and misinformation, and with a lack of real debate about the real consequences, and as the negotiations unfold, both the chaos and the cost stand at odds with what the

country was led to believe would happen. Democracy is a process, not a day. A country can vote. *En même temps*, a country can change its mind.

Labour's position is interesting in this. Virtually all its MPs voted Remain. *En même temps*, many of their constituencies did not, and the referendum has created the rare if not unique situation of MPs' own opinions – which voters often say they want to guide decisions – being at odds with the expressed views of the population as a whole.

Jeremy Corbyn voted Remain. *En même temps*, he has long been sceptical about the EU and did not campaign as vigorously for Remain as he did for his own leadership, or in the general

Labour needs to shift much further on single market

Labour's new Brexit policy is a step in the right direction – but doesn't go far enough, say the party's MPs HEIDI ALEXANDER and ALISON McGOVERN



Have you ever had that excited but exasperated feeling when your team's so close to scoring yet can't quite manage to get the ball in the back of the net? Strange as it may seem, that's how we felt this weekend listening to news coverage of Labour's developing Brexit policy.

There's no doubt that Keir Starmer's announcement on temporary single market and customs union membership should be welcomed. It has moved the Labour Party forward and offers the least worst, short-term answer for the British economy. It is consistent with both the outcome of last year's referendum and the results of this summer's General Election. And it opens up a political space for parliamentary damage limitation.

But it doesn't achieve the ultimate goal: there is still much to be done if the Labour Party is to define a coherent long-term vision for the country.

Many sensible things have been said in the last few days. We need to avoid the cliff edge for the economy that would be associated with leaving the single market and customs union in two years' time.

We need to do all we can to give certainty to British businesses who are currently negotiating contracts and investment deals. Why sign a new contract to supply goods to a European company if they are insisting you absorb the financial risk attached to any potential future tariffs when you don't know what they might be? How do you plan for your staffing needs and support services if you don't know what customs regime will be in place or whether you will now have to make customs declarations? The idea that David Davis, Boris Johnson and Liam Fox will be able to provide certainty on these issues in the next 18 months is fanciful.

The Labour Party is right to be on the side of businesses who are grappling

with these questions and right to be on the side of employees whose jobs depend upon them. As the TUC's Frances O'Grady has said, Labour's announcement sets out a sensible and smart approach. It's one which buys time and will give some protection for jobs and living standards. But in recognising the benefits of the single market and customs union for a limited transition period, it begs the question, what comes next? If it's right for the economy in 2019, won't it be right for the economy in 2025?

Some might argue that a focus on the single market and customs union for transition is simply a three-year delay to Hard Brexit, although it is significant that Starmer has been clear that all options should be kept on the table about the permanent arrangements which might follow.

As two MPs who have recently launched the Labour Campaign for the

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election. He makes much of the attractiveness of Labour's manifesto to explain his better than expected election result. *En même temps*, it is at least arguable that much of the manifesto, dependent as it is on an economy that works better than the one we have, would not be remotely deliverable if Brexit delivers the economic decline most Labour MPs are convinced it will. They want a 'jobs first' Brexit. *En même temps*, that is almost certainly a contradiction in terms.

During the referendum, Leave benefited from the Labour leadership's relative lack of enthusiasm. During the election, Labour benefited from the ambiguity contained within an *en même temps* approach. Many Remainers

assumed Labour's position to be broadly anti-Brexit, because they were so anti-Tory. Many Leavers assumed Labour's position to be broadly pro-Brexit because they didn't go on about it much, and unlike the Lib Dems they ruled out a second referendum, and membership of the single market and customs union. This was too close to a Boris Johnson style 'have cake and eat it' approach, and was unsustainable for the long-term.

As Corbyn bathed in the adulation of crowds at Glastonbury, they had warmed to his clear anti-austerity, anti-tuition fees, anti-Tory stance. *En même temps*, those young people were almost certainly overwhelmingly anti-Brexit, and would catch up with the reality of Labour's position over time.

From left,
Labour leader
Jeremy Corbyn,
Prime Minister
Theresa May
and Chancellor
Philip
Hammond

Photos: PA

Single Market, we would argue that Labour should be unequivocal in making the case for continued and permanent single market and customs union membership. We believe that if we want our children to have decent jobs, if we want to protect the economy so we can tackle austerity, invest in public services, stop a race to the bottom across Europe and protect our rights, membership of the single market and customs union is a no-brainer. Yes, there may be trade-offs, but the prospect of queues outside the job centre in Liverpool or Lewisham is not one we are prepared to countenance.

Whilst the simplest way to stay in the single market and customs union would be to stay in the EU, the electoral and parliamentary realities in 2017 make this implausible. We are realists, we acknowledge the referendum result last year and we are engaged in the serious business of damage limitation. Parliament will hardly overturn the

result of the referendum, so the next best option is to stay in the European Economic Area (EEA) and stay in a European Customs Union.

And it's in Parliament over the next few months where much of this will be played out. The second reading of the Bill formerly known as the Great Repeal Bill takes place in September.

As presently drafted, ministers will have the power to determine when "exit day" is, when the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice ceases and when we stop being part of a whole range of regulatory bodies covering matters as diverse as aviation safety and medicines authorisations. The Bill also currently gives ministers the power to decide when the UK notifies other contracting parties to the EEA Agreement of the UK's withdrawal from the single market.

David Davis should not be able to sit behind his desk in Whitehall and at a

“The country voted to leave the EU. *En même temps*, as Philip Hammond has consistently tried to point out, we did not vote to make ourselves poorer.”

Labour has been clear that the referendum result cannot be challenged. I understand that. *En même temps*, if a decision taken in one timeframe and one set of circumstances turns out to deliver the opposite of what was promised – a weaker not stronger economy, less not more money for the NHS, more not less confusion about the Irish border, less not more clarity about legal and trading arrangements with the biggest market in the world – then MPs who believe that have a duty to say so, and fight for a better alternative. Just as anyone else has a right to keep campaigning for a better alternative.

What happened with shadow Brexit secretary Keir Starmer's statement this week was that a bit of realistic *en même temps* was thrown into the Labour mix. If I can sum up what I think he was saying ... we are leaving. But to minimize the potential economic shock of leaving, we should stay in the single market and the customs union for at least as long as is needed for new arrangements to become clearer and bed down.

Cue inevitable howls of betrayal from the hardline Brexiters and all who think life and politics are simple. *En même temps*, cue within Labour for those who think this is just a step in the right direction but does not go far enough, to feel more emboldened to say so. By a happy coincidence, Starmer's new position emerged as his fellow MP Heidi Alexander was preparing to launch a new campaign to get Labour to commit to the single market not just for a transition period but for the long-term, as she sets out in *The New European* below.

What it all shows is that politics is fluid and dynamic. Leaders have to lead, but sometimes they also have to adapt and respond. Macron may be the butt of jokes

for his *en même temps* approach. Theresa May could do with a lot more of it. Imagine how much better a position we as a country, and she as Prime Minister, might be in, if, on entering Downing Street, she had said: "The UK has voted to leave and we have to respect their decision, and make departure happen. At the same time, we must respect the views and the fears of the millions who voted Remain, and deliver a Brexit that commands the broadest possible support across the country, not just one admittedly large strand of opinion. That means continuing to see the EU as friend not enemy."

Instead, like so many of her predecessors terrified that her party's right wing's obsession with Europe would swallow her, worried that she had to compensate for (nominally at least) fighting for Remain, she set a course aimed purely at and for the 52%, and the more extreme end of the 52% at that. So many of her problems – the botched negotiations that mean we are little further forward than a year ago; the ludicrous 'red line' on her obsession with the European Court of Justice; the botched election that means her authority is so drained – stem from that early failing.

The fiasco over overseas student numbers – she claiming almost 100,000 had illegally overstayed their welcome, the reality less than 5% of that, because the facts as she wanted them fitted the argument she wanted to put forward – suggest it is a personality trait, born of her lack of subtlety, her inability to do *en même temps* at all.

But precisely because the negotiations are being handled so badly, precisely because her authority is so drained, so the situation becomes more not less fluid. Starmer's new position represents that, and is sign also of Labour's increased power within this dynamic as a result of May's election failure. Some of the subtle and less subtle shifts in the government's positioning papers represent it too.

Both main parties have shown that when faced with uncomfortable truths and consistent campaigning, they can be made to change.

The likelihood remains that we will leave. *En même temps*, nothing is certain, and everything is to fight for. Brexit means Brexit. *En même temps*, what the hell does that mean anyway?

stroke of a pen determine whether the UK leaves the single market. That would be an affront to our democracy. This must be a decision for Parliament. If we can first win a vote on who decides whether we leave the single market, there is a chance we might then win a future vote on staying in it, be that for transition or more permanently.

All of this only works though if the Opposition is united and a small number of Conservative MPs vote with us. The fact that Labour has now put clear red water between ourselves and the Government on transitional arrangements means the fight in Parliament is on. It means the uneasiness of great swathes of the country with the direction that the Government is taking us on Brexit, as evidenced by the General Election result, can be reflected in votes in Westminster and it means we will have a proper debate about what Brexit looks like.

In response to Starmer's comments this weekend, man of the people Nigel Farage took to Twitter to claim "the Great Brexit betrayal has become more complete". When Farage is unhappy, you know you are doing something right.

With so many of the Leave promises having been exposed as deceitful mirages, Parliament must now behave responsibly to protect the national interest. The Labour Party, as the official opposition, has fired the starting gun for this process.

As Brexit reality emerges, the need to go further will undoubtedly grow and the Labour Campaign for the Single Market will make that case.

■ Heidi Alexander is Labour MP for Lewisham East; Alison McGovern is Labour MP for Wirral South. To support their campaign, sign the petition at www.labour4singlemarket.org

LETTERS: Have your say, email letters@theneweuropean.co.uk



Clacton's fake nostalgia for a time that didn't exist

My 78-year-old heart sank to my boots on reading Anthony Clavane's piece on Baby Boomers last week. From my recollection of pre-EU membership, the latter part of the '40s and early '50s was a decade of recovery from WWII with little joy – a restricted diet, smog, outside lavatories.

I remember being terrified in the '60s regarding nuclear war and the Bay of Pigs. By the early '70s we had the three-day week and the difficulties of attempting to put a meal on the table in candlelight. I would like to know from where the retirees of Clacton purchased their rose-tinted spectacles.

Anne Newton
Stockport

As a Baby Boomer myself, the views of Clacton residents do not chime with mine; in particular, the Shangri-la of "we never had it so good pre-EU".

I remember things differently – the poverty, slum housing, unemployment that, in the 1950s and 1960s, the welfare state was only just beginning to address.

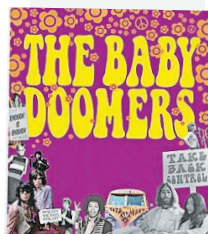
I was not aware of falling off a cliff once we had joined the EU. My abiding memory is of rather exciting food appearing in the shops, and the dire British diet livening up a bit. Cafes and restaurants sprouted up and we started talking to each other.

The Second World War has become the psychodrama that plays to all that is wrong with Britain within the EU. There is a view that it was Great Britain who won the war, with little help from outside. This, together with a misunderstanding of the word 'Great' (a geographical concept) and the dominance of Germany in the EU, means these folk can never move on. As the article said, nothing will persuade them.

Val Mainwood
Wivenhoe

Clacton's ruthlessly pro-Brexit Boomers are an inspiration. Brexit is expected to cause a long-term loss of some 10% of GDP, or around £200bn per year. Government revenues are around 35% of GDP, so a 10% drop means £70bn less for public spending.

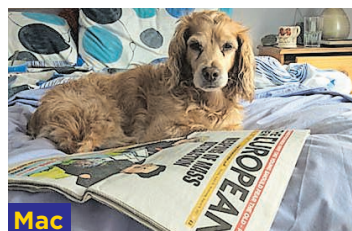
But state pensions cost £90bn a year, and 65% of voters over 65 voted Leave.



Animal readers of TNE



Fourni



Mac



Scotty



Miro

This is Miro, named after Joan Miro, the Spanish European surrealist artist. He's 2, lives in Market Harborough, owns David Letts and wants to know why human Brexiteers are being so bloody stupid.

This is Mac, who rents rooms to Karen and Pete. Mac is from Guatemala and had to spend six months in quarantine when he arrived in the UK.

He's therefore a strong advocate of the EU's principle of freedom of movement.

In autumn 2015 Fourni – owner of Oliver – exchanged the sun-soaked beaches of the Peloponnese for the more moderate temperatures of Nottinghamshire. Naturally, she's convinced of the folly of leaving Europe.

And finally this week, here's Scotty from Hastings, owner of Gerry Turner. Scotty says no to chlorine-washed chicken.

■ Send photos of your pets reading TNE, together with crucial biographical details, to letters@theneweuropean.co.uk

The obvious solution is to cut pensions by 65% or £58bn, and let the generation that mostly voted for Brexit pay for most of it.

This is a controversial idea, so we should hold a referendum to ensure we know the will of the people. As in the EU referendum, we must ignore the interests of those who will be most affected, so pensioners will not be allowed to vote.

Of course many old people will lose out, but they will be reassured by empty promises from wealthy politicians, and they can starve happy in the knowledge that it is a price worth paying for Brexit.

Never mind cake, let them eat sovereignty.

Chris Webster (aged 54)
Abergavenny

It was enlightening but painful to read, in Anthony Clavane's article on the Clacton Baby Boomers, how many of them believed that, because of their experience, their vote was more

important than that of the younger generation. This is exactly the polar opposite of what their views were when they were young.

The youth of the 60s and 70s believed that they (we) knew better than our parents how the world could be improved. Hippies fought for freedom, love, peace and equality, while skinheads just fought (especially against Pakistani immigrants).

While the latter would naturally grow into fervent UKippers, many of the former seem to now interpret 'freedom' as 'Taking Back Control'. Many of us however see it as having the freedom to work, live and travel where we want; to live in peace and harmony with our neighbours wherever we may be and whatever their nationality – the exact same principles which led Churchill to believe in the importance of a united Europe of nations.

Paul Herbert
Kent

I read with amazement the arrogant complacency of the folk of Clacton in last week's article by Anthony Clavane.

Let's suppose the NHS collapses post-Brexit. Whether from increased drug costs that tip it over the edge of the funding precipice, a lack of skilled staff that only the well-funded private sector could solve, or the sneaking privatisation in a UK left wide open to American companies by a government desperate to do a trade deal with Trump's USA.

Would Baby Boomers be quite so happy to get Brexit if they lose their beloved NHS (of which they are the main users)? Somehow I think I know what the answer would be.

Anthony French
Doncaster

Bold Labour

Jeremy Corbyn's shift our way on the single market is most welcome, even if he

How did The President react to the Houston flood disaster?

TIM BRADFORD

What's going on?



was bounced into it by the near-certainty of losing a conference debate on Brexit,

Corbyn and his supporters won me over during his first leadership campaign by stating that a Labour party which simply parroted Tory and even UKIP lines on migrants was not worth voting for.

A Labour Party playing a 'clever' game on Brexit by refusing to acknowledge the elephant in the room and just waiting for the issue to blow up under the Tories would not have been worth voting for either. It was vital that they engaged in the national interest and it is a huge credit that they have done so.

Don Miles
Edinburgh

This unambiguous statement on Brexit, released prior to the new round of negotiations with the EU, is a strategic masterstroke which has caught Tory high command fast asleep in their beds.

It is to be welcomed that the views of Labour MPs and loyal party members have been recognised. It is right indeed that we mark our own path on this issue and are not seen to be following the

Conservative Hard Brexit brigade. Now the hard work starts – the hard work of educating the public into the benefits of remaining in the customs union and the internal market of the European Union.

It is right and proper that all options are on the table when it comes to Brexit and when I say all options I don't just mean being in the customs union and the single market. I mean all options including the one to remain full members of the European Union.

James Chespy FRSA
Gillingham

I expect that in the months to come, as the polls tighten and perhaps even slightly swing back the Tories' way, we will hear from some in the Corbyn/McDonnell axis that Keir Starmer's new Brexit policy has cost Labour votes. A similar line was used by them to blame Corbyn's disastrous poll ratings last year on rebel MPs rather than his own struggles to get to grips with the role.

The last three opinion polls have shown a three-point Labour lead, a three-point Tory lead and a one-point Labour lead (within the margin of error). The

ROBERT MILLER: A VERY SPECIAL UPDATE ★

Letters from Brexiteer Robert to The New European this week: 10 Letters by Robert which were so good that we polled Twitter asking whether we should print them: 1

Irony result of Twitter poll: 52% Print; 48% Remain unprinted

Letters by Robert Miller which we are publishing in this issue: 1 (see elsewhere on these pages)

truth is that currently there is no significant Labour poll lead to defend.

B Simmons

It will come as no surprise that cardboard Corbyn has, at geriatric pace, realised he should have actually campaigned to stay in the EU. I am suffering no surprise as he U-turns on staying in the single market and all that entails.

Corbyn has managed to do a Conor McGregor. The Labour leader talked big to win popularity and establish a falsely elevated position creating deceitful expectations among the naive.

Then the real world punched him on the nose and he's now going down in a display of non-entity. Except this affects real people. For a long time.

Amanda Baker
Edinburgh

Great Walsall

The letter in which Judith King describes her difficulties in setting up a pro-European group in Walsall struck a chord. "Not easy" was her summing up.

This is all too credible. I am trying to set up a group in Stoke-on-Trent, the heart of Brexitland. Perhaps any

pro-European 'Stokie' reading this could contact me. The email address is below.

Margaret Brown
mb392164@gmail.com

Perhaps Judith King is being too modest in her search for a venue for a first meeting of Remainers in Walsall. Sod the Kipper pubs and the Leaver landlords; forget damp, uninviting church halls – physical and metaphysical both; go for the town's most brilliant building, the Stirling Prize-nominated New Art Gallery

Why? Apart from it being a great building, it only exists because of EU funding. The council estimates the building's value to the community in millions.

A bit of gratitude from Walsall Kippers wouldn't be too much to ask, would it?

Peter Cox
Cardiff

It finally happened...

Remain letter writer Judith King says that her local newspaper in Walsall won't print her letters. How dispiriting. Wonder what that feels like.

Robert Miller
Liverpool



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After seeing your image, in the August 17–23 edition, of Jacob Rees-Mogg joining the Ministry Of Silly Walks, I was reminded of this photo of him (taken outside his house).

Peter Lefeuvre

AGENDA

There is a rare chance of peace in Syria. But, HAMISH DE BRETTON-GORDON writes, Brexit is getting in the way of the UK and the EU playing the role we should



There was a time when you turned on the news, and all you heard was Iraq. Then came Syria. Now there is Brexit.

Day after day, argument after argument, split after split, Brexit, Brexit, Brexit. It is as though we can only cope with one big issue at a time.

As someone who has worked most of my life in the military, and since then as a chemical weapons expert and campaigner, I admit that Iraq and Syria – today especially the latter – are of greater interest to me than whether UK ministers and European Union negotiators can agree on Brexit.

Yet, especially on my most recent trips to Syria, I am beginning to see more clearly that the Brexit distraction is getting in the way of other huge challenges, and as a consequence reducing our authority, our relevance, and our ability to carry out our obligations to the rest of the world. Both the UK and European Governments are abrogating their responsibilities to help sort the Syrian crisis.

As Barcelona becomes the latest European city to fall victim to ISIS-inspired terrorism, we are reminded again of the interconnected nature of our world and its manifold challenges. But as we survey the international picture as it relates to Syria, we are painfully absent considering that we remain one of the great military powers, and a major diplomatic force with our permanent seat on the UN Security Council, along with the US, Russia, China and France.

It is the Russians who are putting military police on the ground to monitor the ceasefire, which they, the US and Jordan agreed for Southern Syria at the G20 a few weeks ago. This has now also been extended to East Ghouta, scene of one of the Assad regime's most horrific chemical weapons attacks in 2013, which took the lives of up to 1,500 people, mostly women and children. On the face of it, this ceasefire should, in effect, turn the 'symbolic but nebulous' de-escalation zone in these areas into a Safe Zone. Yet, the major rebel town in the area, Daara, has been pounded and besieged by Assad forces. Aid hasn't reached Daara for more than six months and there are horrific stories of deprivation and starvation, just a few miles from Jordan's border.

It seems clear that President Vladimir Putin is now tiring of the Syrian war and has achieved his strategic objectives of greater relevance, the sewing of confusion, and more specifically the establishment of an air and naval base on the Mediterranean. He would now like to reduce his military presence in Syria and improve relations with the US.

President Donald Trump showed his positive intent in Syria, when he ordered the destruction of Syrian jets which dropped the deadly nerve agent Sarin on Kan Sheikoun killing up to 100 civilians in April. But fair to say his interest in this, as in so much else, waxes and wanes.

Brexit bandwidth could scupper Syria peace



The energetic President Emmanuel Macron of France has indicated he is keen to support peace with his Mediterranean counterpart and will even acquiesce to a Syria in future run by Assad if that would secure peace. I understand other Western Governments including the UK may soon share this view. This would be the game changer. In conversation with some of the most influential Syrian Diaspora, many of them now accept that Assad might have to play a role in future; this view is possibly even more significant.

The other key players in this most complex of situations are Turkey, Iran and Israel. Turkey would like to secure its southern border, and is vexed by the Syrian Kurds and their US-backed military arm, the YPG [People's Protection Units] doing most of the heavy lifting and being successful against ISIS in Raqqa. Quizzically, Turkey has

excellent relations with the Iraqi Kurds in Northern Iraq who may opt for an independent Kurdistan later this year; but view the PKK, in effect Turkish Kurds, as terrorists, as does most of the globe.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu initially supported the ceasefire but then retracted, as it was suggested that the forces to police it in Southern Syria, between the Golan Heights and Israel, would come from Iran, their greatest enemy. That idea was a non-starter, given Israel and Iran must be separated in time and space to prevent them coming to physical and ideological blows, and further destabilising the region, if that were possible.

Syria itself is devastated, starving and in the main razed to the ground. The fresh and vibrant hopes of the Arab spring are washed away in blood down the Euphrates over the last six years,

which have seen more than 400,000 deaths, around four million refugees and 11 million displaced in Syria. The terror of ISIS expanded and then contracted to Raqqa.

Without hope, and at least the prospect of some sort of fair, effective governance in Syria, as another ISIS soldier is killed so another will rise from this chastened population. If we don't physically and ideologically defeat ISIS in Syria and Iraq it will be much more difficult to defeat them on the streets of London, Paris, New York, Moscow, Beijing – and Barcelona.

For the UN Geneva Process, tasked with finding the political solution, to have any chance of success, there needs to be a "proper" ceasefire and copious amounts of humanitarian aid delivered. It would appear that all those with a dog in this fight – Russia, the US, Turkey and Iran – have agreed the ceasefire, but it

A huge explosion sends clouds into the air after Assad regime forces carried out air and ground strikes in the Eastern Ghouta region of Damascus, Syria on August 20

Photo:
Ammar Al-Bushy/
Anadolu Agency/
Getty Images

AGENDA



A member of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces in Nazlet Shehadeh on the western side of the Syrian city of Raqa
Photo: DELIL SOULEIMAN/AFP/Getty Images)



Hezbollah fighters fire at a position occupied by the Islamic State (IS) group in Syria's Qalamoun region on August 26, 2017. The Lebanese Hezbollah and Syrian army dealt a heavy blow to the IS forces in Syria's Qalamoun region near Lebanon to end the presence of the terror-designated group in the border region
Photo: Xinhua News Agency/PA Images

simply is not working comprehensively. To give just one example, Turkey, Russia and Iran set up four de-escalation zones in May 17 in Idlib Province, Homs, Ghouta and in the south around Daara. These appear to be escalation zones rather than the converse, with Idlib, Ghouta and Daara especially hard hit, and with chemical weapons allegedly in almost daily use in Ghouta and Idlib recently. Idlib is currently over run by the Jihadists and Al Qaida and there is a strong argument for international action rather than indiscriminate Russian and Syrian air strikes to secure this province with its two million desperate civilians, mostly refugees.

This is where the UN must come in. The UN, not the Russians, should be playing the UN role. With powers as varied as Russia, America, Turkey and Iran united in wanting the ceasefire, it must be possible for the five permanent

members of the UN Security Council to agree to get UN monitors on the ground to verify it. The second enabling function which only the UN can adequately oversee is to get aid to all who need it quickly, which is most of the people in Syria. There are huge amounts of aid available in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. But if it does not get to those who need it, then we will see a repeat of Iraq 2003, where the battle was won but the peace was lost by not feeding and administering the vanquished and destitute, and the conditions in which terrorists could flourish were allowed to grow.

Of course there are risks to any UN peacekeepers. There remain pockets of IS and Al Qaida that need to be avoided. The regime's attack on a UN convoy in Aleppo last year is still fresh in the mind. But the political situation has changed, not least Russia's posture, and the UN is the only viable and fair delivery merchant. China

is not much touched by Syria and ISIS, at the moment, but would benefit from support of the Permanent Five to deal with North Korea, and better commercial relationships with the US in particular. So we may have a rare opportunity to get the P5 aligned, to make the hitherto improbability of peace and prosperity in Syria an option.

Britain can and must play a leadership role in making this happen, by motivating and mobilising the UN to act. Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has talked about UK troops being on offer for a UN force to monitor the peace and deliver aid in Syria. He and the Prime Minister must move from talk to action.

It is time we lifted our head out of the Brexit mire to show we are still capable of doing something that historically we have been really good at, diplomacy and muscular humanitarianism – that is getting aid to the most difficult places.

As a P5 member we can and we must mobilise the UN to monitor the ceasefire and enable this aid. Only then will there be the remotest chance of the Geneva process working to deliver a long-term solution to this most horrific crisis, which at times has moved us so much, and from which we now, lost in Brexit, appear to be averting our gaze.

In the very short term, with RAF transport aircraft a short flight away in Cyprus, the ceasefire provides the opportunity to air drop hundreds of tonnes of aid into Daara and the environs in Southern Syria now, to alleviate the most acute suffering, and give a chance for ground based aid to ramp up. The time to do it is now. But I worry that with Brexit consuming the bandwidth in Downing Street, the Foreign Office and everywhere else in government, the need will be obvious but the political will and energy sadly lacking.

Time is running out for Syria, and that matters to us. Because failure to tackle these problems there, now, will impact on our streets, in the future. The UN must be front and central to the solution. There must be direct political, diplomatic and financial support from the P5 and other wealthy donor countries. Israel and Iran must be kept apart. Due deference must be given to the Turkish and Kurd issues. Above all there must be full support for the Geneva Peace Process.

I gauge from my many discussions with people inside and outside Syria that if the UN leads as described, the people, war-weary and starving, are ready for peace, and are prepared to negotiate some of the really tricky issues which have thus far been intractable.

To prevaricate anymore, at this stage, will be to replay the post-conflict mistakes of Iraq 2003, in spades, and condemn the vast majority in Syria to terminal decline, stoke the embers of IS, and so prolong this shadow of terror to the UK and elsewhere ad infinitum?

Let us not use Brexit as the reason to excuse ourselves from our global responsibilities to enable peace, humanitarian aid and reconstruction where it is needed, and most especially in Syria and Iraq right now. Global Britain does not need Brexit to have meaning. This region, and the security of the world needs a Global Britain right now, Brexit or not.

■ Hamish de Bretton Gordon, a chemical weapons expert specialising in the Middle East who advises NGOs in Syria, was a UK Army officer for 23 years.

AGENDA

Chris Sutcliffe

On media



How do you measure a paper publisher's true digital value?

If you're looking for a phrase to describe the change in newspaper print circulations this year, it might well be "the bigger they are, the harder they fall". The latest figures from the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) demonstrate that only the Metro managed to increase its print circulation year-on-year, with every single other national title recording a fall.

The responsibility of accurately recording those print circulations falls to the ABC, who set the industry-standard measurements and effectively acts as a guarantor that the figures are true.

Its chief executive Simon Redlich explains: "There's a great deal of trust associated with ABC, so a bit like a British Standard stamp on a plug, you accept that's a safe plug to use. You have that confidence that 'I can rely on those numbers because they've been independently verified'."

Since the newspapers' ability to sell print advertising is inextricably linked to their capacity to reach huge audiences, those falls are enough to provoke existential dread at many titles. The figures suggest that print circulations aren't going to gradually tail off, allowing publishers time to find an exit strategy, but that they're falling off another cliff.

No wonder, then, that the publishers make such a big deal of digital audience growth. For the titles without paywalls, their financial results trumpet the number of average unique viewers their digital properties receive. That way, they have some positive growth figures with which to court advertisers.

But measuring digital reach is significantly harder than print circulation. The sheer number of channels across which publishers have to distribute their content means that

getting an accurate number of unique readers is often tricky.

Redlich explains that the ABC is working with publishers and platforms alike to ameliorate that problem: "It's not something we can necessarily go into in a great deal of depth, just because of our ability to access the data behind the headline level. It tends to depend on the environment and whether they allow publishers to tag their content to get the information we need to verify things."

"We're in regular discussions with the industry in the broadest sense, and some of these technology companies to work out the best way we can demonstrate the full repertoire of what publishers are doing."

But while the ABC is working with all sides of the industry, a second issue is that the technology companies behind the platforms don't play nice with one another, competing to keep users within their own walled gardens. Worse still the platforms have traditionally resisted sharing their data with publishers. It adds up to an environment in which publishers have extremely concrete proof of their falling print presence and in-depth audience data for their own sites, but a hazy guess at best at their actual digital reach.

That's something Redlich believes is changing, as publishers, platforms and advertisers reappraise their relative values to one another: "I think in some respects it's what the buying community wants as well, not just the publishers. Quite often, people are pragmatic in that you can't necessarily start with the perfect solution. You can steadily improve things and develop from there."

As in so many other cases, then, it will require collaboration between publishers and platforms alike to accurately gauge their worth to advertisers.

Publishing platform Medium is taking a different tack: It is trialling a 'Clap' system, where subscribers effectively rate the quality of a piece by hitting the clap button as many times as they want. It's a more granular system than the binary 'like' or 'dislike', but there is scepticism about whether the system will act as a genuine measure of a story's quality.

THE WEEK IN EUROPE

Uphill struggles, of one form or another, appear to characterise many of the stories generating interest and comment in newspapers and on websites across Europe

Sisyphean tasks



BELGIUM: The series of terror attacks across Europe in recent years has dealt blow after blow to community relations that have taken decades to construct, argued the writer Malika Madi in *La Libre*. "Sisyphus: it's you, it's me," she wrote, "Sisyphus is embodied by everyone working to build bridges and dialogue between the different communities that make up our societal landscape and who, with each step forward, with each effort to push the stone higher, must resign themselves to watching it tumble downhill again."

The public response to terrorism, Madi continued, is putting Europe's models of cultural exchange at risk, with "the multiculturalism of the western world badly wounded, even in danger of death. Maybe you have already heard people chuckling to themselves while saying, 'we told you so. Offering a space for multiple cultures to live together, without labels or the right to interfere (in the image of Great Britain and its outrageous cultural relativism) is a poison that is slowly killing our millennia-old West... Terrorism reduces day after day the empathy one community has for another. Terrorism gives rise to racism among people who were not affected by it."

What can be done to halt the damage? Madi was not optimistic about campaigners' power to turn the tide, but said she would return to Belgian schools to raise awareness about cross-cultural understanding: "in front of today's youth who will be the adults of tomorrow, I will once again try to explain the complexity of the identity we need to construct when we have one foot in the East and one in the West."

Hope for Turkey?



TURKEY: Maverick nationalist politician Meral Aksener caused a stir earlier in the month after announcing she would found her own political party. Previously a member of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), Aksener has been an outspoken critic of President Erdogan and campaigned against giving

him more powers in April's referendum.

Batuhan Çolak, a commentator from the opposition newspaper *Yeniçağ*, noted that this is no ordinary political development, claiming Aksener's new party deserves the title of 'most talked-about political formation' in the history of Turkey's Republic. He wrote that "Meral Aksener's name was used 116 times by the news channels on 25 August," while "18 columnists from different newspapers wrote about Meral Aksener and her new party" the next day. And it was the pro-Erdogan media that seemed most preoccupied by her, since "only four of the articles were objective or positive, the rest, meanwhile, was negative and tried to link the new party with terrorism and coup plots."

Çolak argued such hostile attention is no coincidence: Aksener represents a real threat to Erdogan's regime and threatens to split the nationalist vote. And the press is now more than ever under the regime's control. Unlike its coverage of the foundation of Erdogan's party, the AKP, in 2001, it is now "overwhelmingly partisan and writes according to instructions from the Presidential Palace."

Democratic deficit



FRANCE: Barely a week goes by without new polls showing Emmanuel Macron's popularity is in freefall, with voters turning against him even faster than against his immediate predecessor, the unloved François Hollande. And Guillaume Goubert, a columnist for the Catholic daily *La Croix*, observed most commentators believe Macron's problems are only just beginning – his proposed labour law reforms will be "a decisive test" of his ability to change France's economic and social structures.

Nevertheless, Goubert argued, Macron has one big advantage: "the extraordinary fragmentation of the opposition... On the left, there are several families – socialists, ecologists, Mélenchonists, communists – who are bickering among themselves. On the right, there is not only the divide between the Republicans and the Front National, but also deep hostilities within these two parties. In other words, a significant part of these political forces is occupied with internal quarrels and not with opposition."

Compiled by
Simon Pick-
stone, English
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rop, a web-
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European news
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which publishes
in 10 different
languages. Find
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★ Players from all over the digital publishing game are trying to figure out how you accurately value an individual piece of content. The Knight Prototype Fund at Stanford is developing a news quality scoring system, while some publishers are adopting time spent with content as a measure of the worth of an article beyond the simple view count.



While the stars may have aligned for Macron, Coubert was anxious that this lack of effective opposition ultimately benefits no one: “the good functioning of democracy requires a credible and effective opposition to hold the executive to account. The government itself has an interest here in order to refine its projects in the light of the opposition’s counter-propositions. The absence or, at least, the weakness of reasoned contradiction within parliamentary life leaves dangerously open the prospect of passion-driven one-upmanship in the media or on the street.”

Defining integration



GERMANY: Conservatives reacted badly to a recent Europe-wide study from the Bertelsmann Stiftung that showed Muslim Germans are largely well integrated into the job market and feel a strong connection to the country. Among them was Ferdinand Knauf, a columnist

for the business weekly Wirtschaftswoche. While complementing the report’s authors for what he saw as “top PR professionalism”, he attacked their interview methods as unscientific: “the questions regarding the notion of integration are put in such a way that hardly any other result could be expected. Who would respond to the question ‘how attached do you feel to Germany?’ by telling the interviewer ‘not at all, actually!’ It’s no wonder that only four per cent of Muslims in Germany do so.”

Knauf criticised the report as symptomatic of a wider shift in attitudes, in which the successful ‘integration’ of new arrivals in Germany no longer requires cultural assimilation. “Contributions to the debate like this Bertelsmann study further the ever greater transformation of ‘integration’ into a slippery concept – one that has had all meaning sucked out of it. Even a few years ago, people understood integration to be a process of cultural adjustment for immigrants to their new communities. Today it is clearly enough to have a job and ‘leisure-time contact’ with people of other religions to count as integrated. Among immigrants themselves, ‘integrated’ has simply become a synonym for not being a loser or a failure.”

Bottom of the class

OBSERVATOR CULTURAL

Romania: Ten years of EU membership have been a mixed bag for Romania, with many people disappointed at the slow rate of progress in the country’s social development. Writing for the weekly magazine Observator Cultural, columnist Carmen Musat added her voice to the pessimists, targeting in particular the shoddy state of Romania’s education system. “In spite of all the ‘reforms’ that national education has endured over all these years,” she argued, “the number of functionally illiterate school leavers (both before and, yes, even after university) is huge compared to other countries in the EU. Since the Romanian government has not yet found a way to stimulate professional achievement, seriousness, creativity, dynamism, the ability to innovate or, last but not least, critical thinking, the prospects of real change in Romanian society are minimal.”

This state of affairs, Musat continued, is a major obstacle to attracting academic talent back home – especially because so much of the educational system is tarnished with fraudulent practices and corruption, where “plagiarised or bought doctorates” are common and academic posts are held by “professors whose careers have been built on nothing”. She concluded with a stark warning: “as long as the public sphere here is occupied by petty politicians who, regardless of their political stripes, neither want nor are able to take measures to unblock the current situation, the practices of power will remain the same.”

Gung-ho attempts to talk up economy can’t paper over cracks

Attempts to look on the bright side, economically, are – as ever – undermined by the same doubts and uncertainty surrounding Brexit, says ANGELA JAMESON



A press release lands from a private equity company that wants to talk up the economy.

ECI Partners, which invests in small-to-medium-sized growing firms, says that the 350 businesses it has surveyed for the last eight years are more optimistic than ever, with more than half of them predicting that revenues will climb by a fifth this year.

The weak pound is apparently turbo-charging their businesses and seven in 10 of them want to sell overseas, the highest ratio for more than five years and significantly more than the 11% national average of all companies that export, according to the CBI.

So who are these dynamic businesses and where do they want to sell to? Well most (53%) want to sell into Europe, followed by (52%) the US.

Eldon Robson, CEO at Hexham-based drinks company Fentimans, says: “We’re forecasting turnover of £50m by 2020. The main flow of the tap will be exports – that will represent 60% of the business in three years. We currently sell into 65 countries and that is rising to 72.”

So no harmful effects from Brexit then? Well it’s not quite so simple.

These fast-growing companies may be benefitting from the cheaper pound, but they still have concerns about the longer term impact of Brexit.

They want more clarity from the Government about what will come out of the EU negotiations and that the economy won’t be trashed in the process.

The same gung-ho press release says two-thirds of companies are scared that the UK will tip into recession, while more than a third think that negotiations will go against them.

Consumer companies and financial services firms are even more pessimistic about trade negotiations with the EU, with almost half consumer companies and 45% of financial services firms worried that trade talks will go against them.

Plagued by skill shortages, some companies also think that Brexit is deterring skilled EU workers from

applying for jobs here. The EEF – which represents British manufacturing – said this week that 25% of manufacturers had seen applications from EU nationals drop, reflecting warnings from accountants KPMG of a looming brain drain.

As the EU ratchets up negotiations with criticism of the UK’s “position papers” as ambiguous and “not satisfactory”, the Brexit challenge continues to beset businesses.

The Labour Party’s announcement that it will now support staying in the single market is a welcome development but realistically the pro-Remain business lobby will not rush to back Jeremy Corbyn as Prime Minister, should Theresa May’s government not last.

Labour is opening up a debate that is needed, but most businesses still need to see certainty and clarity about what will happen next. Should they borrow more to invest in new equipment or hire new people? Is it worth putting in the time and money needed to start selling in Europe, when new tariffs could be imposed on their goods in less than two years?

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister is visiting Japan this week to help drum up post-Brexit free trade deals. Japan is one of the biggest foreign investors in the UK, particularly in the car industry through

Nissan, Honda and Toyota, and in rail, with Hitachi. Japanese companies have said recently that they remain committed to their employees and factories here, but if the UK is not able to replicate the EU’s trade agreement with Japan after Brexit, there is every probability that the EU and Japan would be better economically integrated than the UK and the EU.

Unfortunately for May it looks unlikely that Japan will rush into a new trade deal, while their priority is still to complete a deal with Brussels – reached after four years and 18 rounds of negotiations – announced earlier this summer.

Stock markets in Asia and Europe are also jumpy as North Korea’s unprecedented missile launch sent investors diving for cover. The FTSE 100 index of leading companies fell sharply on Tuesday, as did European markets.

Some analysts see the twitchiness after the return from the bank holiday as an indicator that a larger stock market collapse might be just around the corner. Three major FTSE 100 companies – WPP, Provident Financial and Dixons – suffered sharp falls in share prices last week, aggravating investors’ nerves.

Sterling is now at its lowest against the euro since the financial crisis of 2009. Hopes that the Government can finally make some progress in this third round of Brexit negotiations are fading fast across the City.



AGENDA

NORWAY

Asylum rights at the heart of election battle

By Staff Reporter
letters@theneweuropean.co.uk

Norway's Prime Minister Erna Solberg has distanced herself from calls by her coalition partners to detain rejected asylum seekers in secure facilities, as the country prepares to go to the polls.

Elections for the Norwegian legislature – the Storting – will be held on September 11, with Solberg's Conservatives hoping to retain power. Since the last election, in 2013, her party has ruled in a two-party minority government with the populist, anti-immigration Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet, FrP). However, Solberg has attempted to distance her party from its partner's controversial proposal. "FrP has always been of the opinion that people whose asylum applications are rejected should be held in secured facilities. They have not received backing [from other parliamentary parties] for that, and we agree with this [the lack of backing]," Solberg said. "It is not a foundation for this government and is not going to become one."

Her comments follow a call from Sylvi Listhaug, a FrP MP and minister for immigration, for asylum seekers arriving in Norway without definitive identification or papers to be held in secured facilities until their identity could be confirmed. Asylum seekers whose applications are rejected but do not leave Norway of their own free will should also be detained, she said.

International human rights conventions should not be allowed to take precedence over the necessity of the measure, Listhaug added. But Solberg dismissed the notion that human rights conventions could be renegotiated following the election.

"We must use secured facilities more, but we will not broaden the scope of who can be detained in them," she said.

"FrP has always said this. That they



Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg, right, and immigration minister Sylvi Listhaug

Photo: Pontus Hook / NTB scanpix

are saying it again during the election campaign cannot come as a surprise to anyone. But it is not the policy of the other conservative parties," she added. "We believe that it is possible to ensure the security of Norwegians, fight terror and have a responsible immigration policy within the parameters of the human rights conventions," Solberg said.

The coalition between the Conservatives and FrP is aiming to become the first centre-right administration to serve two full terms in Norway's history. It has been facing a lead in the polls by the centre-left administration. However, this has narrowed in recent months, as unemployment has fallen and the

economy has improved since the 2014 oil price crash, blunting one of the Labour Party's main messages – that many voters have been left behind by the country's economy.

Recent polls suggest Jonas Gahr Store, the Labour leader, is still favourite to become prime minister but his fate increasingly depends on how some of the smaller Norwegian parties perform.

In particular, Labour's slipping support in the polls has led to speculation about a formal alliance with the Green Party, which wants to break with decades of Norwegian policy and stop oil drilling. The centre-right in turn could be boosted if the Liberal party gets over the 4% threshold for extra parliamentary seats.

SCANDINAVIA

Pilots for the SAS airline could go out on strike within days, after failing to reach an agreement on how to interpret rules in a collective bargaining agreement. The dispute centres on differing interpretations of an agreement reached on pilots' working conditions. The strike threat comes from the Danish and Norwegian unions Dansk Pilotforening (DPF), SAS-flygeres Forening (NSF) and SAS Norge Pilotforening (NSF), and does not include the Swedish pilots' union. The three unions threatening to strike make up around two thirds of SAS pilots. SAS is 50% owned by the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish states.

DENMARK/GERMANY/NETHERLANDS

The numbers of grey seals in the Wadden Sea – in the south eastern part of the North Sea – have reached record levels. A total of 5,445 were counted in a monitoring project this year – a 10% increase from last year. The numbers are highest on the Dutch and German coasts, but are also on the rise in Denmark, where the 221 recorded was a 50% rise. There were no seals of the species living in the area around 10 to 15 years ago, and experts believe some of the increase may be coming at the expense of the more common harbour seal. Fishermen have expressed concerns over the population growth and last year permission was given for a limited cull.

AUSTRIA

A football fan has been given an 18-month prison sentence for performing a Hitler salute during a match. The unemployed 39-year-old, a Rapid Vienna supporter, was spotted giving the banned gesture during a match in August 2016. "I didn't really give it much thought. But it clearly wasn't a good idea," the skinhead told the court, saying he had had "a few beers and spritzers" before the game. Similar convictions are relatively common but usually the sentences are suspended. In this case, however, the man had a previous conviction for wishing Hitler happy birthday on Facebook in 2013. Adopted in 1947, Austrian laws banning any promotion of Nazism or Holocaust denial are some of the strictest in Europe.

RUSSIA

Council workers in St Petersburg have been accused of taping branches to otherwise threadbare trees in an effort to spruce up a street for a competition.

EUROPE

Four offer new support for migrants

The leaders of France, Germany, Italy and Spain have agreed on a new policy to grant asylum to vulnerable migrants who apply for protection while in Africa instead of their destination countries.

They also offered to support Libyan coastguards and help Chad and Niger with border control, in an effort to stem migration to Europe. It follows a summit in Paris, at which President Emmanuel Macron of France, Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, and Italian and Spanish leaders met with those from Chad, Niger and Libya – all three of them transit countries for migrants. EU

foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini also attended.

In a joint statement released afterwards, the four European leaders acknowledged a need for initiating in Chad and Niger the process of resettling in Europe "particularly vulnerable migrants". They announced they plan to carry out "protection missions" in the African nations in cooperation with the United Nations' refugee and migration agencies.

The process would allow migrants to immigrate legally to Europe if they are on an eligibility list provided by the UN refugee agency and registered with authorities in Niger and Chad.

The joint statement also said it was "important to equip and train in an adequate manner Libyan coastguards", while emphasising the importance of "protecting human rights" of desperate migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean to Europe in rickety boats.

The number of migrants reaching Italy from Libya by sea dropped by almost 70% in July and August compared with the same months last year, but experts say the numbers could easily rise again without further measures. There has been a small increase in flows from Morocco to Spain.

AGENDA



A 'caixer' rears up on his horse during the annual festival in Sant Lluís, Menorca

Photo: Matthias Oesterle via ZUMA Wire

POLAND

Bishop calls for Sunday trading ban

The country's leading Catholic bishop has spoken out in favour of an almost complete ban on shops opening on Sunday, amid growing public controversy over the proposal.

Archbishop Stanisław Gadecki said the move is "what all Catholics, non-Catholics and non-believers need". The proposal for such a ban was put forward last year by the powerful Solidarity trade union, backed by a million-strong petition, and has been batted back and forth in a parliamentary sub-committee ever since.

Clerics have been careful to make their arguments in favour on quality of life, rather than religious, grounds. "Families don't just need financial support, they need time for themselves," said the Archbishop of Katowice, Wiktor Skworc.

He appealed to the government to "show some compassion for women in the form of those who have to work in supermarkets on Sundays", and accused it of showing "contempt" for Solidarity and the bishops by delaying consideration of the ban. He also warned local MPs and senators that he expected

them to vote "in line with the views of their voters," the *Wirtualna Polska* website reports.

However, there has been strong opposition to the proposal in many circles, with recent polls in favour of keeping shops open. Critics of the ban argue it would severely harm retail tourism from Germany and Scandinavia.

The government and retail groups have suggested compromises like shutting shop every other Sunday, or only after lunch, and the rival OPZZ union confederation proposes higher wages for Sunday working.

NORWAY

A tourist guide has been fined 1,300 euros for scaring off a polar bear. The case referred to an incident in May on the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard when a group of tourists on a snowmobile expedition spotted a bear standing still, 900 metres away. To get a closer look, the guide approached the animal, which fled from the area. In a statement, Svalbard governor's office said: "The regulations say that it is forbidden to approach polar bears in such a way that they are disturbed, regardless of the distance."

AGENDA

THE BREXIT FACTOR

Titanic fight for UKIP captaincy heats up

STEVE ANGLESEY picks out the worst Brexiteers of the week

10 PAUL NUTTALL

The only man to win the Grand National as jockey, trainer AND horse opened an article for the *Daily Telegraph* with the words, "It has been just over two months since I stood down as leader of UKIP after the general election. During that period, I have had a lot of time to reflect on the things we got right."

Well, that was the first 10 seconds of his retirement taken care of. Paul did add that he'd also considered "things we could have done better"... which might just have taken him significantly more time.

9 AIDAN POWLESLAND

Running for Nuttall's old job, the computer games entrepreneur appeared to have been playing some of his old titles too long when he told their West Yorkshire hustings that his plan to build an interstellar spacecraft and colonise nearby solar systems would make Britain the "richest country in the world".

However, Kippers appear to believe Powlesland's moderate views on Muslims are more far-fetched than his belief that we will rake in billions by mining asteroids for platinum. So far he is failing to Klingon (sorry) to Anne Marie Waters and Peter Whittle in the leadership polling.

8 HUGH WHITTOU

The *Daily Express* editor has defended his misleading use of non-scientific reader polls on the EU, despite twice being censured by press watchdog IPSO for doing so.

Whittou told *Press Gazette* that to "counter" pre-referendum polls suggesting a Remain win, "the *Daily Express* held frequent polls in the newspaper and online which although not as allegedly scientific as face-to-face and telephone polls (nearly all of which failed to predict the correct result), gave a reliable indicator of the public mood overall".

Well, almost. A much-heralded *Express* poll run 30 days before the actual vote gave Leave a 93.7% lead, only overestimating their support by 41%.

7 BORIS JOHNSON

Having told parliament on July 11 that the EU could "go whistle" if they expected Britain to pay any divorce bill, he assured Radio 4 on August 25: "Of course we will meet our obligations, we are law-abiding, bill-paying people." Let's hope the sizeable golden handshake doesn't impact on Boris' promise to give an extra £350million a week to the NHS, which surely will be reaping the benefits any day now.

6 DAVID COBURN

"I have had enough of pashmina sofa politics pushed on UKIP," declared the party's Scottish leader, another one of the 11 candidates to replace Paul Nuttall as Captain of the Titanic. With such passion on display, it seems almost churlish to point out that there isn't such a thing as a pashmina sofa.

5 DANIEL HANNAN

Fresh from calling for the late Philip Seymour Hoffman to play Steve Bannon in a movie, the absurdly-nicknamed Brain Of Brexit branded Labour's proposal to remain part of the single market "childish".

This, of course, is the same Daniel Hannan who, during the referendum campaign, assured swing voters: "Absolutely nobody is talking about threatening our place in the single market."

4 JANE COLLINS

Low on brass but with plenty of brass neck remaining, the Yorkshire and Humber MEP suggested during a car crash TV interview that it's quite normal for political party leaders to face going broke with debts of hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Collins is running to replace Paul Nuttall despite her financial troubles and when the interviewer said, "there can't be many people who want to lead a political party who owe more than £300,000 and are facing bankruptcy", Collins replied: "You don't know that, do you? Are you privy to their bank accounts?"

3 DAVID TC DAVIES

Informally known as "even worse than the other one", the Brexity Monmouth Tory MP tweeted that "Police could save fortune by not paying 4 interpreters 4 non English speakers".

Yeah, who needs costly interpreters when foreign nationals can just tell police about being assaulted or raped by using the medium of mime? It's a wheeze every bit as sensible as Davies' demand last year for dental checks on underage refugees.

Davies distinguishes himself from his Brexit secretary namesake by billing himself as 'David TC Davies'. Those middle initials stand for Thomas Charles, though readers may have other ideas...

2 NIGEL FARAGE

The nicotine-stained man-frog's £23-a-ticket one-man-show at Lancaster's Grand Theatre in October has been mysteriously cancelled – possibly on Trade Descriptions Act grounds as it was billed as 'An entertaining evening with Nigel Farage'.

But one appearance Nigel DID make was in front of a 30,000-strong crowd at a Republican Hindu Coalition event in Chicago, where he was introduced by its right-wing leader Shalabh Kumar as being "very, very active with Hindus and Indians in the United Kingdom". Well, in a manner of speaking, yes...

Clearly a man of discernment, Kumar has previously described Steve Bannon "unbelievably nice... just an absolutely great guy."

1 PATRICK MINFORD

A week after the discredited Brexiteer economist laughably claimed leaving the EU would boost Britain's trade by £135 billion a year, he assured the impartial *Daily Express*: "The economy is doing very well."

Naturally for Mystic Minford, there shortly followed news that UK growth in the last quarter was just 0.3%, the lowest among all G7 nations and half the growth rate of the Eurozone.

Meanwhile, Minford was hailed by Neil Hamilton as "Britain's most reliable and accurate economic forecaster", which is high praise indeed from Britain's most respected and freebie-averse politician.

Key



Latter-day Gandhi



Fake news



Doesn't add up



Legal troubles



Comedy character



U-turn



Porky pies



Space cadet



Basic error



Race Card

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A refusal to confront its past leaves France facing an uncertain future, argues **MARTIN EVANS**



All countries have difficult chapters from their past, which continue to cast a shadow on the present. For France, the Vichy period certainly fits into that category. But, as the country has lately been considering, its colonial past is every bit as defining. A striking feature of this year's French presidential election was the importance accorded to the aftermath of empire. Whether French colonialism was wholly positive or negative, or a complex mixture of both, took centre-stage in a manner unthinkable in Britain where, although the imperial legacy is part of the everyday atmosphere – think Theresa May's global Britain as a post-colonial neurosis – it rarely becomes an explicit topic of mainstream political conversation.

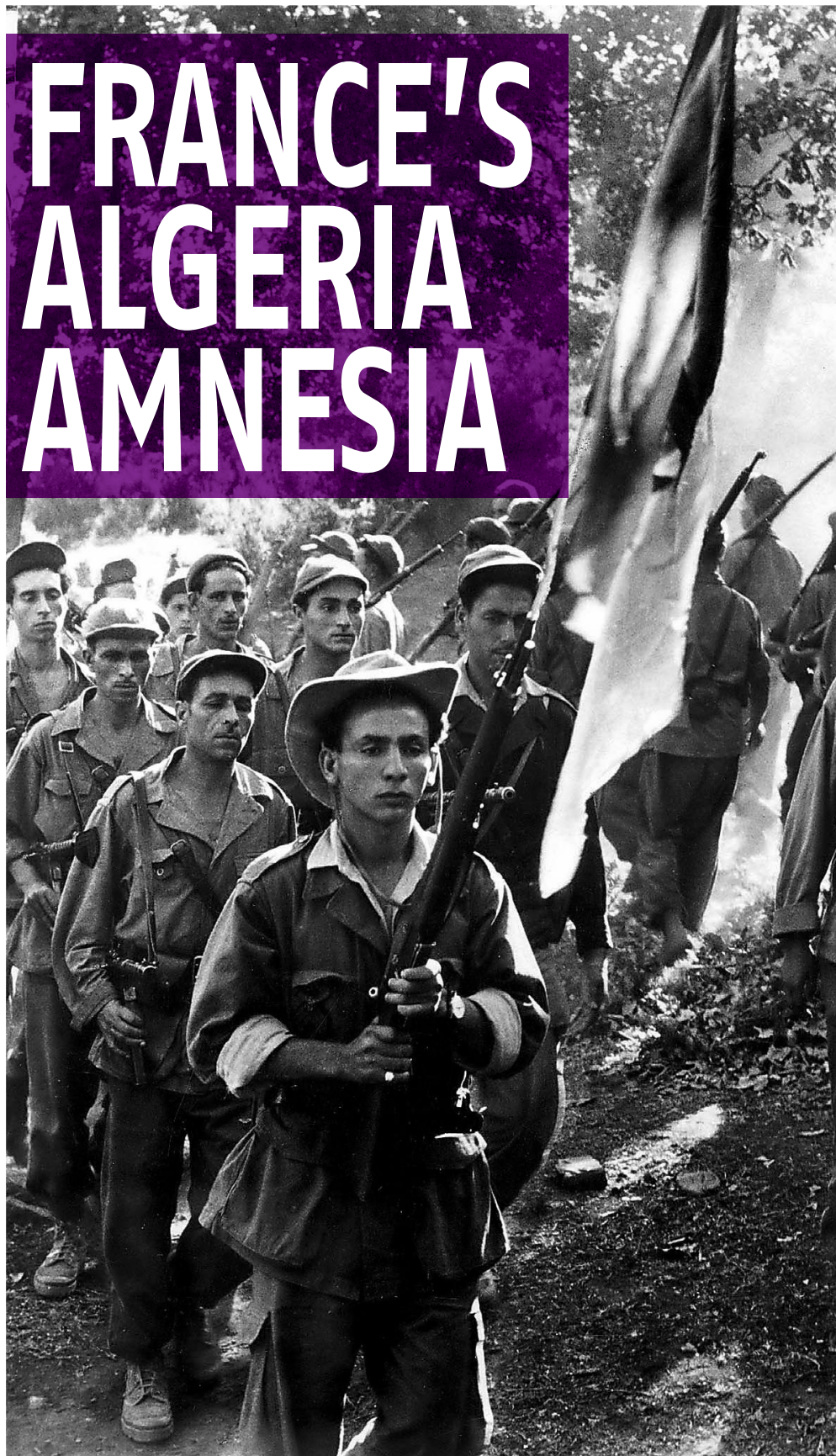
France's colonial controversy was ignited by the centrist candidate and eventual winner Emmanuel Macron during a visit to Algiers in mid-February. Speaking to the media he described French actions in Algeria, independent since 1962 after an eight-year war that ended the 132 years of colonial rule, as "genuinely barbaric" which today would be categorised as "crimes against humanity"; a violence, he underlined, that is "a part of our past that we have to confront by apologising".

By any stretch of the imagination these words were an unambiguous condemnation, notable not only because they went further than any previous French politician but also in how they represented a new tone on Macron's own part. A few months earlier he had been more equivocal, telling the magazine *Le Point*: "Yes, there was torture in Algeria, but there was also the emergence of a state, or wealth, of a middle class... This is the reality of colonialism. There are elements of civilisation and elements of barbarism."

Macron's comments produced an immediate howl of protest from his main rival Marine Le Pen, leader of the far-right National Front. For her this was an anti-patriotic act of self-flagellation designed to ingratiate himself with French voters of immigrant origin, made all the more shameful because he uttered these words in Algeria, the former jewel of France's colonial civilising mission. On Facebook she posted: "Is there anything worse when you want to become president than going abroad to accuse the country you want to lead of crimes against humanity?"

François Fillon, candidate for the conservative Les Républicains, was equally damning. He denounced Macron for perpetuating this "hatred of our history, this perpetual repentance that is

FRANCE'S ALGERIA AMNESIA



Guerrillas from the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) during the Algerian War (1954-1962). Photo: TopFoto

unworthy of a candidate for the presidency of the republic", adding in an interview with the right-wing daily *Le Figaro*: "The crime against humanity, it's the Shoah, genocides, slavery... Daring to compare colonisation with these dreadful events is a true flaw". Last year, Fillon claimed colonisation was not a violent imposition but a sharing of a French culture with the peoples of Africa, Asia and North America.

These attacks prompted Macron to clarify his remarks. Confronted with angry protestors in the south of France, home to a large number of *pieds-noirs* – former settlers who left Algeria after independence, and their descendants – he defended himself on the grounds that he had not meant "to say that those who were living in Algeria and who served in the French army were guilty of crimes against humanity". Instead, he contended, it was about recognising that the sole responsibility of the French state.

This return to France's colonial past was not new, however. The Macron episode was but the latest in an on-going psychodrama where confronting this history has become inseparable from contemporary debates on migration, race and multiculturalism. This psychodrama was clear in 2002, when Jean-Marie Le Pen, Marine's father, reached the second round of the presidential elections; a shock result which led *Le Monde* to publish accusations that Le Pen carried out torture as a paratrooper during the Algerian War.

It was clear, too, in February 2005, when right-wing MPs passed a law which specified that the French school curriculum should "recognise the positive role of the French presence overseas, especially in North Africa" – a law subsequently rescinded by President Jacques Chirac after professional historians such as Sylvie Thénault attacked the legislation as a travesty of intellectual inquiry that marginalised slavery, racism and colonial expropriation. And it was clear in autumn 2005 when, in the face of the riots across France's dispossessed suburbs, the authorities responded with the methods of colonial era repression, resorting to emergency laws last used in the Algerian War to re-impose order.

Benjamin Stora, France's most prolific historian of the Algerian War, interprets these moments as symptoms of a deep-seated colonial syndrome that mirrors the country's problems in acknowledging the Vichy Regime's collaboration with the Nazi occupation. For Stora, France is a society in denial over colonialism in general and the Algerian War in particular and through a series of articles, books and film documentaries he has sought to overcome this amnesia – a trajectory that has provoked much hostility, partly because he comes at this history from a left-wing perspective, but also because, as an Algerian Jew born in French Algeria in 1951, he is seen to be too personally bound up with this complex past.

EXPERTISE



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One starting point to understand this syndrome is the National Museum of the History of Immigration, situated on the very edge of eastern Paris near to the Bois de Vincennes. Opened in 2007, the Museum is not housed in a purpose-built edifice but within a beautiful Art Deco structure that was the legacy project of the 1931 Colonial Exhibition.

Recreating the French Empire miniature, this vast Exhibition celebrated France's civilising mission in the colonies across the four corners of the world and within the museum the frescos on the inside and the sculptured frieze on the outside still project a benevolent enterprise spreading progress to grateful 'native' populations. And the consequence is a tension where the building's imperial history arguably overshadows the museum and produces confusion. After all, it is not a museum of empire but of immigration: a story that touches French people of Portuguese, Italian and Polish origin as much as those descendants from former colonies, even if empire is a crucial dimension of the story from the First World War onwards.

Dogged by a number of false starts for

over a decade or so, the impetus for the museum came from several directions. There was a grass-roots element from community migrant organisations determined to have their histories officially recognised. But it was also top-down from Jacques Chirac who, chastened by Le Pen's success, became convinced that France needed an immigration museum, both to combat prejudice and recognise the unique role played by migration in French history. Unlike much of Europe, Chirac argued, France is an immigrant nation. Already by the early 1930s the country had the highest proportion of migrants anywhere in the world, including the USA.

Chirac's personal imprint explains why his rival and successor Nicolas Sarkozy shunned the museum's official opening. He had no desire to endorse a Chirac pet project. Plus, Sarkozy knew that the museum did not play well to a National Front electorate he had so assiduously courted to win the presidency in 2007. The result was a climate of official hostility made worse by criticism which saw the museum as dangerously anti-French. Why? Because it dared to deploy an Anglo-Saxon terminology of community and multiculturalism, although *Le Monde*

praised the site as a significant step forward in understanding the complexities of modern Frenchness. "This museum bears witness that 'French identity' exists, but it has always been mixed," the paper said.

To some extent the atmosphere improved with the presidential victory of the Socialist Party candidate François Hollande in 2012. Already in 2006 he had talked about how, in justifying the violent repression of the Algerian liberation movement in the mid-1950s, French socialism lost its soul during the Algerian War. So, it was no surprise when he appointed Benjamin Stora to a senior strategic position within the museum to boost its national profile. Nor that he inaugurated the museum as a national institution in December 2014 with a forceful speech which recognised how diverse origins and cultures ultimately strengthen overall national unity: "Today one in every four French people has at least one foreign grandparent. To talk about the history of immigration is to talk about the history of France; it's history, our history.... This diversity is an opportunity if we can appreciate it, build on it, take it to a new level, if we can express a shared desire to live together, which means full commitment to the Republic. Otherwise

it means falling into the trap of division, the threat of ghettoisation, a clash of cultures and therefore racism, anti-Semitism and hatred of the 'Other'."

Yet, if the National Museum of the History of Immigration provides an insight into how the imperial aftermath operates at the very top level of politics, Aix-en-Provence, a second starting point for understanding the French colonial syndrome, provides a more localised perspective. A beautiful university spa town 19 miles to the north of Marseille, studded by trees and fountains, Aix took in a significant proportion of the million *pieds-noirs* who fled to France at Algerian independence. In fact by the mid-1980s a fifth of the town's population was of *pied-noir* origin. But these *pieds-noirs* were not welcomed into France with open arms. They were blamed for the brutal war in Algeria that had cost so many lives. They were also considered foreign by a lot of mainland French, principally because many were Italian and Spanish in origin and had never even been to France.

This societal alienation explains why *pieds-noirs* turned in on themselves in the years that followed their arrival in France, constructing their own memorial culture to the lost world of French Algeria evident everywhere in Aix. One

(1) A car burns in an Algiers street in June 1957 during an outbreak of violence prompted by the bombing of a casino in the Algiers suburb of St Eugene in which seven people were killed and 83 were wounded. (2) A man examines one of the bullet holes in French president Charles de Gaulle's Citroen after an assassination attempt in Paris on August 22, 1962

EXPERTISE



(3,4) *La Haine*, 1995 (5) Pieds-noirs and Algerians in a bar in Algeria in 1958 (6) A Paris hotel destroyed by a bomb in November 1961, during the Algerian War

Photos: Bettmann Archive (Photo by Keystone/Getty/CoverImages/Bernard Lipnitzki/Roger-Viollet/TopFoto/ AFP

early example, unveiled in 1965, at the entrance to the main Saint-Pierre Cemetery contains a long stone wall with a grieving mother figure before an eternal flame while the bas-relief of flying birds symbolises their forced migration – images of suffering and victimhood that have become central to pieds-noirs narratives.

Societal alienation also explains why some pieds-noirs became a fertile ground for the extreme-right. Given that de Gaulle – the “great betrayer” – sold out French Algeria, few pieds-noirs completely recognised themselves in mainstream right-wing Gaullism. Instinctively a significant number felt much more at home with the National Front, formed in 1972, whose nostalgia for French Algeria was obvious from the beginning. Le Pen had fought in Algeria and many of the early leaders were ex-members of the Secret Army Organisation (OAS) which carried out bombings and assassinations in France and French Algeria in an effort to keep Algeria part of France, including several near misses on de Gaulle’s life.

The pieds-noirs have always voted for the National Front in greater numbers than the rest of France right up to the last presidential election; a link that is obvious in the pied-noir website,

babelouedstory.com. Taking its name from the working class pied-noir quarter of Algiers during the colonial period, the website scrutinises politics and media for any anti-French Algeria sentiment. Gleefully listing left-wing candidates who lost their seats in the recent National Assembly elections – each ridiculed with a fez-style saucepan on their heads – the website is viciously anti-Macron. A heavily rouged-lipped picture of the new president alternates with slogans that attack him as the president of “the establishment”, of “foreign power”, of “globalisation” who peddles “a needless apology culture” while forgetting the true values of “nation, family and religion”. Macron’s new party En Marche is ridiculed as a cynical reworking of the Socialist Party.

Anti-global, anti-establishment and anti-liberal Babelouedstory.com reflects an age of right-wing anger that was at the heart of Brexit and Trump’s victory. A different kind of anger, however, can be found in the Seine-Saint-Denis department just to the north of central Paris, a third starting point for understanding the French colonial syndrome. Commonly known by the first two digits of its postal code, the 93, the most ethnically diverse department in France, has become a byword for the

breakdown of urban France, the so-called banlieues that ring-fence French cities. Certainly the statistics make grim reading. Seine-Saint-Denis has one of the highest unemployment rates in France – 40% of those under the age of 25 – and this is undoubtedly linked to patterns of prejudice derived from colonialism. So, although in theory all French people are equal citizens in the eyes of the Republic, in reality if you are called Mohammed or Aïcha, brought up in the 93’s run-down housing projects, you are second-class citizens when it comes to education and employment.

The consequence is a deep-seated isolation from broader French society that has produced a tinder-box atmosphere in the 93, evident in the long standing enmity between young residents and the police.

The department is home to Clichy-sous-Bois where the accidental electrocution of two boys from a nearby housing project as they fled the police touched off the 2005 riots already mentioned. More recently riots were sparked by a police attack on a 22-year-old youth worker, Théo, in Aulnay-sous-Bois in February this year.

Arriving in hospital covered in blood, doctors concluded that his injuries were the result of a police truncheon forced

into his anus during a violent confrontation with the police in, something later confirmed by Théo to the *Huffington Post*: “They put handcuffs on me and then they told me to sit down. They sprayed tear gas in my face, and then I had a pain in my buttocks. My trousers were lowered. I was in serious pain.” The resultant #JusticepourThéo campaign was particularly incensed by the police claims that these injuries were accidental, caused by an officer’s baton slipping into the victim’s anus. Graffiti and protest banners simply stated “police rape” and, as the first weeks of February witnessed nightly clashes with the police, the then Interior Minister, Bruno Le Roux, intervened to suspend the four officers concerned, charging one with aggravated rape and the other three with aggravated assault.

This anger at the police, often seen as an occupying force, was at the heart of much of the hip-hop that emerged in the 93 during the 1980s. This culture was not a pale imitation of the original New York hip-hop, even if it was inspired by Bronx rappers like Afrika Bambaataa. Through break-dancing, graffiti art and rapping in French this culture was rooted in the

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urban experience of the 93 – a badge of honour – whose most famous expression was the rap duo Suprême NTM. For Joey Starr and Kool Shen, born Didier Morville and Bruno Lopes to Martinican and Portuguese parents respectively, rap music became a way of expressing their everyday experience of racism, inequality and police brutality. With songs such as *The Police* – a disparaging critique of police repression – and *What Are We Waiting For...*, a bitter portrayal of destroyed hope that contained the line “to set everything on fire”, provocation was all: incendiary lyrics that led to a long-running battle with the authorities.

In cinematic terms this urban disaffection has been captured in Mathieu Kassovitz's 1995 film *La Haine* and more recently in Céline Sciamma's 2014 film *Bande de Filles*, translated as *Girlhood*. Shot in grainy monochrome hues, *La Haine* tells the story of three young men from the banlieue, climaxing with a stand-off with the police and a voiceover stating simply this is “the story of a society falling apart”, while *Girlhood* focuses upon four young black women, celebrating their joy in life and inner resilience in the face of a racist and misogynist society determined to marginalise them at every level.

A large part of this young urban culture is driven by a hatred of FN – one Suprême NTM video has members of the bands entourage urinating upon the FN symbol – and not surprisingly this hatred is mutual. Jean-Marie Le Pen has forever painted the banlieues in apocalyptic terms. For him the ‘meltingpotism’ of races in the 93 represents a destructive mix because he feels that these populations, as relatively recent arrivals, have no roots in the French nation and hence no understanding of real French values.

In the run-up to the last election Marine Le Pen sought to sanitise the FN's image by expelling her father in light of remarks denying the Holocaust, one of his perennial themes. Nevertheless despite this rebranding the hatred of young banlieue residents has remained a constant. In the FN media they are still not only routinely criminalised but also continually linked to Islamism and terrorism. This in turn is why Marine Le Pen ceaselessly talks about the need for strong law and order to control these dangerous banlieues – a language of fear that taps into widely-held anxieties generated by the Paris and Nice attacks but also recalls colonial stereotypes of threatening Arab and Black masculinities.

The presidential election revealed a France that was deeply polarised society; one dissatisfied with the status quo – this was the first time that neither a Gaullist nor a socialist had made it into the second round – but also riven with open conflict over the colonial past. In this respect there is still anger on all sides and for the foreseeable future France seems to be stuck in limbo, unable to turn the page on this imperial history in any meaningful manner.

■ Martin Evans is Professor of Modern European History at the University of Sussex. He is the author of *Algeria: France's Undeclared War* (Oxford University Press, 2012). He is presently writing a history of contemporary Morocco for Yale University Press

PLENTY OF FLIP FLOPS FROM SUMMER'S VERY SILLY SEASON

The dog days of summer are traditionally a time for Fleet Street's finest to get creative as they try to fill the lull in politics. And that has never been more so than this year, as the Brexit press see the wheels coming off their cherished project. **LIZ GERARD** reviews how a very silly season played out in the papers



It's time to get serious, Michel Barnier told David Davis when they reconvened to talk about Brexit on Monday.

Which just goes to show how little the EU's chief negotiator understands Britain. Monday was August Bank Holiday, the last hurrah of the British press' annual ‘silly season’ – that summer hiatus in the political cycle, when newspapers tend to get especially creative, or frivolous. Who could seriously expect our Brexit bulldog to get serious before September?

From Theresa's pink shirtwaister to Jeremy's flip-flops, this has been, for the newspapers, the Brexit summer and a record-breaking August: record drops in the value of the pound, in unemployment, in migration, in rain.

First task of any summer is to see who is going to run the country while the boss is away. We actually have a deputy prime minister, of sorts, in Damian Green, but nobody seemed to expect him to do the job. Boris was sent to far-off lands to minimise his mischief-making. Davis, if we are to believe reports, is too idle. So Philip

Hammond picked up Caesar's crown and the rest of the Cabinet (and not a few backbenchers) picked up their knives. The *Mail* helped their cause along with a hatchet job from Andrew Pierce on the mandarin he claimed was pulling Phil's strings.

Before you knew it, we had Liam and Boris against Phil on a transition period, then we had Gove v Hammond on fishing. Then Liam and Phil united on transition. And then Davis and Hammond united on negotiations. Are you keeping up?

This was, of course, what Madam May wanted. Let the underlings squabble and everyone would see how strong and stable she was as leader. Except in the background we had the papers talking up Boris or Ruth or David v Theresa and the silliest story of all: Moggmania and the prospect that Jacob, begetter of six offspring, might move his brood into No 10. It was enough to make former Thatcher aide Matthew Parris, now of the *Times*, talk about voting Labour.

Top priority for M Barnier is the divorce bill. But nobody has a clue how much it will be. Figures mentioned through the summer included £100bn, £80bn, £50bn, £36bn and £10bn (as a “gesture of goodwill”, as the *Express* put it). There is at least recognition all round now that we'll have to pay something, prompting an attack of realism from Boris Johnson who went from saying “go whistle” to “We will meet our obligations.” Yikes!

That's not all we'll have to pay. There's the small matter of the two European agencies leaving our shores when we quit the EU. The *Times* got August off to a cheery start by reporting that moving the European Medicines Agency is likely to set us back 600m euros. More than half of that is because some bright spark signed a 25-year lease that doesn't run out until 2039 – so, with no break clause, we'll be paying 347m euros for a building we won't be using. Very silly.

But never fear, the *Express* tells us that Britain's Brexit boom has seen £50bn invested in the UK and the promise of 44,000 new jobs. The claims come from the “making Brexit happen” campaign group Change Britain, based on “company statements and media reports” – presumably like the one last November when Jaguar said it might consider creating 10,000 jobs if the Government spent £450m on

EXPERTISE

infrastructure. There are no specifics, but we're promised that the "true figures" may be higher.

And, as we are constantly told, Europe needs us more than we need them; the world is gagging to buy our stuff – especially, it seems, in the summer holidays. "From ice cream to swimwear, you can find UK holiday exports in travel destinations around the world," declared Liam Fox. "Last year alone, more than £300m of these goods have been sold across the globe."

Sadly, as the *Times* pointed out, official figures released that same day showed a 5% fall in goods exports between May and June – an 8% drop in sales outside of Europe (the world is our oyster?) being partly offset by a 2.7% increase in sales within the EU (who needs Europe?).

But let's celebrate the fact that share prices are soaring. Which might have something to do with the fact that the pound dropped to an eight-year low as the divorce talks started this week – to 1.075 euros, compared with 1.30 euros just before the referendum.

The *Express* doesn't seem too worried about this, which seems odd, given that it was the holiday season. But perhaps it doesn't expect its readers to venture abroad any more. Oh those halcyon days, when it used to celebrate our strong currency with splash headlines saying "Now shares and £ surge" (April, 2010), "Summer holidays get even cheaper" (July 2012) and "Bargain

holidays as costs slashed – half-term joy as pound soars" (February 2015).

Never mind about Liam's swimsuits and ice cream, what about the flip-flops? There have been plenty of them. Remember how Spreadsheet Phil was supposed to be sacked for suggesting a transition period might be in order? Well, now we're going to have one lasting up to four years, except it's not going to be called that. It'll be an implementation period. We'll be out of the single market and customs union, but in something that's basically the customs union. If M Barnier lets us.

And if Labour has its way, we'll be back to a transition period. And we'll still be in the single market and customs union. Which means our sandal-wearing bearded leftie has made the biggest flip-flop of all, having announced unequivocally in July that we would most definitely be leaving the single market. No question. The change of heart secured by Keir Starmer had the amazing effect of producing similar front page headlines from the *Guardian*: "Backlash over Labour's shift to soft Brexit", and *Express*: "Outrage over EU exit betrayal".

All the papers seemed to think this switch was a betrayal of Labour voters. Really? Labour constituencies may have voted Leave, but more than 70% of those who voted Labour in the 2015 general election opted to Remain. And a British Election Study of 30,000 voters found that anti-Brexiteers were largely responsible for Labour's surprise performance in June. It found that Labour took two-thirds of the Green votes cast in 2015 and a quarter of Lib Dem votes. Labour was seen as the "best for those wanting to keep ties with our European neighbours". So much for betraying the voters. Maybe Corbyn was finally listening to them.

In *Mail* land, however, we are not only all Brexiteers now, most of us are Hard Brexiteers. Having cited polls suggesting that even Remain voters want to "get on with it", it is now using as ammunition an LSE poll that offered interviewees binary choices between Hard Brexit, Soft Brexit and no deal at all. Remainers preferred a deal, hard or soft, to no deal, and – perhaps surprisingly – a clean break over a Soft Brexit. Remaining in the EU wasn't an option, but the *Mail* felt justified in interpreting the figures as "Most Remainers now backing a Hard Brexit".

The silliest poll interviewees of the summer were unearthed by YouGov, which found that 61% of Leave voters felt that significant economic damage to the UK was a price worth paying to be rid of the EU. Not only that, 39% said that if they or a relative were to lose their job, it would still be worth it. The figures rose to 71% and 50% among those over 65. In other words, half of Leave-voting pensioners didn't mind their children or grandchildren being put out of work for the sake of Brexit. This prompted Vince Cable to denounce "Brexit martyrs" and accuse the old of shafting the young. Which in turn prompted a flurry of columnists to denounce Sir Vince as "ageist,

disdainful and plain wrong".

That British Election Study may have found that Labour voters cared more about the single market than immigration, but the reverse was the case – by a similar margin – for Tories, who garnered 60% of the Leave vote. For the Brexit papers, there is no either/or. They don't want the single market and they definitely want less immigration. So for the *Express*, nothing demonstrated the need for action than figures published on August 17 showing that a record 2.73m EU migrants were working in Britain.

One in five people seeking work was an immigrant and the number of foreigners working here was up by 126,000 – 87,000 of them Romanians and Bulgarians. This, said Lord Green of MigrationWatch, shows that talk of an exodus of EU workers was just scaremongering.

The actual migration figures, which came out on a week later, were therefore a bit inconvenient for the *Express*. Net

migration had fallen to a three-year low of 246,000, largely thanks to "a surge in the number of EU nationals leaving the country". This, said Lord MigrationWatch was the result of "good fortune". For immigration minister Brandon Lewis it was encouraging. For Cable it was a deeply worrying Brexodus.

On the same day, another report showed that, far from outstaying their welcome, 97.4% of overseas students go home on time. That means that instead of the 100,000 included in the official migration statistics, there are just over 4,000.

The data put May under pressure to remove students from the figures, but she doesn't want to be seen as cooking the books (the *Times* calculates that if they were taken out, the latest net migration figure would be 132,000 – which suddenly makes that 100k target look achievable). George Osborne, who fought May on this very issue in Cabinet, makes mischief from the editor's chair at the *Evening Standard*, and urges MPs to rebel and force her hand.

The exit checks report also looked at other visitors requiring visas – tourists and workers as well as students – and found that 96.3% went home on time. What a relief for the *Mail*, where every silver lining has a cloud: the story homes in on the 3.7% to wait "50,000 stay on illegally and vanish".

As for Brexodus, investment banks continued with plans to move thousands of staff out of London and on Monday, a KPMG UK survey suggests that a million EU nationals working in Britain were considering leaving the country. These are key people: half have doctorates, more than a third have postgrad degrees. The *Times* headline says "Brexit brain drain will leave UK short of top employees". The *Express*, working from the same press release, takes the same angle. What a lack of imagination. The survey actually found that 8% of its 2,000 respondents planned to leave and 35% were thinking about it – against 45% who intended to stay. If I were writing for the *Express*, I'd take the definite stayers over the maybe leavers.

It's not only high flyers who are planning to flee: the *Guardian* reports that Brits approaching retirement are scrambling to settle in Spain, Portugal and France before Brexit. One financial adviser has seen a doubling of inquiries and a 25% increase in business in the past year. Another reports a 20% increase in people looking for European passports.

A week earlier, the paper had noted that 46% of the 148,000 British expats living in France were over 55 and that 43% were economically inactive. Slightly more French expats live over here – 158,000. Of these 65% work in the "high level professions" and more than half are aged between 25 and 44.

Which country has the better deal?

■ Liz Gerard worked in Fleet Street for more than 30 years, latterly as night editor of the *Times*. She now writes Sub-Scribe, a blog about newspaper journalism, at www.sub-scribe.co.uk



Paul Dacre's *Daily Mail* took aim at Theresa May's shirtwaister in a classic silly season story

Photos: Thinkstock/contributed

EXPERTISE

Paul Connew



As Hurricane Harvey began hammering the Texas coast last Friday, President Donald Trump unleashed his own political storm destined to last much longer and potentially gravitate into a constitutional crisis.

Initially the president's highly-charged decision to carry out his threat to pardon the controversial former Arizona sheriff Joe Arpaio was put down to 'news management'; an attempt to 'bury' it as the hurricane story dominated the news cycle.

If so, it failed miserably. Despite the devastation Hurricane Harvey was wreaking, both the mainstream US media and social media still found plenty of time and space to focus on the pardoning and its implications.

And by Monday – the day before he flew to Texas to see the hurricane damage first hand – POTUS was boasting he'd deliberately timed announcing the Arpaio pardoning to coincide with the hurricane because the "TV ratings would be much higher than normal" and it would gain "maximum attention".

Whether true or not, it certainly underscored yet again Trump's total obsession with TV ratings. But the Arpaio pardoning represents something far more dangerous and sinister for American democracy and, perhaps, the fate of the Trump presidency itself.

On its simplest, crudest level it was a Trump ploy to please his core support base among the white nationalist, alt-right, anti-immigrant, 'America First' and 'Build the Wall' brigade. It also reflected an attempt to placate those among them hostile to his U-turn on American military involvement in Afghanistan.

On a more ominous level, critics – including senior Capitol Hill Republicans – saw it as The Donald stress-testing his presidential pardoning powers ahead of Special Counsel Robert Mueller's 'Russian Connection' criminal investigation.

Their fear: If Trump can get away with pardoning an outlaw Arizona sheriff and saving him from jail, then maybe he could do the same for any associates or family members (or ultimately himself?) if the Mueller investigation does uncover evidence of collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign in last year's election.

The Arpaio pardoning saga also provides another insight into the chaos and contradictions that bedevil the White House. On the presidential plane to Phoenix last week, White House officials rejected rumours Trump planned to pardon Arpaio and insisted he would do no such thing. Only for POTUS to veer off script at his 'Make America Great Again' rally (as pro-Trump and anti-fascist protesters clashed outside and police fired tear gas to keep them apart) and indicate an Arpaio pardon appealed to him after all. Later, White House officials again cautioned it 'probably' wouldn't happen.

On Friday, it did.

This was a populist overture to his hardline supporters taken by The Donald alone, defying the advice of chief of staff General John Kelly, his daughter Ivanka, son-in-law Jared Kushner and the great majority of West Wing officials.

It has also since emerged that the president had earlier asked his Attorney General Jeff Sessions to drop the case against Arpaio and received a negative response. Significantly, he didn't even consult the Justice Department before issuing his pardon, a blatant breach of normal protocol.

At this point, it's worth a reminder about the Arpaio back story to explain just why the pardon continued to trigger such massive political and media shockwaves, even as Houston, America's fourth largest city, was battered and swamped by Mother Nature at her most ferocious.

Arpaio, now 85, was the sheriff of Maricopa County, which includes Arizona's biggest city, Phoenix. He was an early and aggressive supporter of Donald Trump's presidential bid and appeared alongside him several times at campaign rallies.

Fanatical on the theme of illegal immigration, Arpaio ran a jail he openly boasted was a 'concentration camp' and where deaths were high among Latino prisoners, and the chain gang system was unilaterally revived. One of his jailers infamously almost broke the neck of a paraplegic prisoner who had the nerve to complain about conditions.

With a Trump-like appetite for self-publicity, Arpaio had become a 'folk hero' among white nationalists and the far right with his tough and dubious approach to law enforcement, which included sweeps of undocumented immigrants in Hispanic communities, and detaining Spanish-speakers under suspicion of being undocumented migrants.

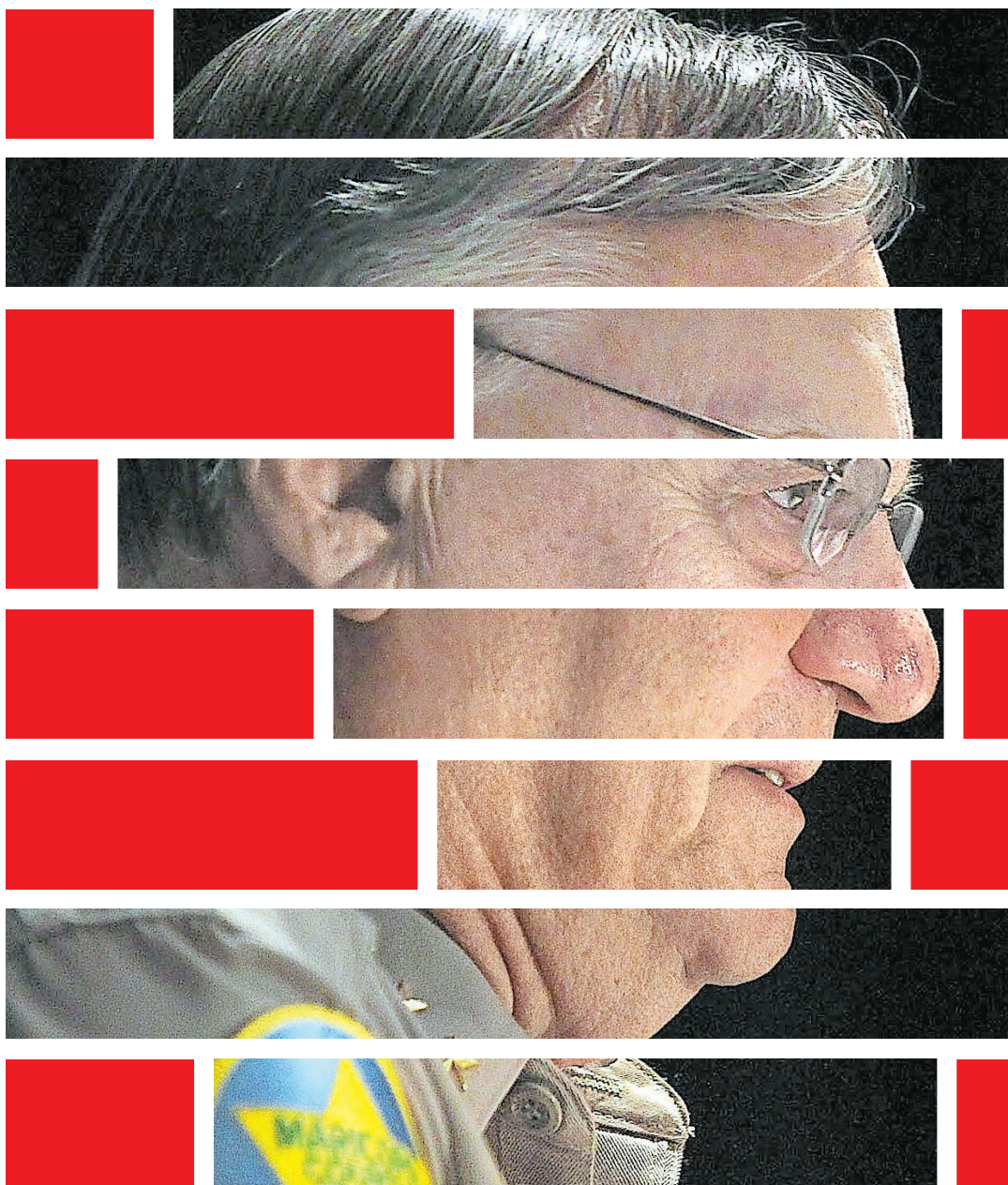
He also stood accused of locking up investigating journalists, launching criminal investigations into political opponents, investigating judges he considered too liberal and mispending over \$100 million in jail funds. Paedophile rapists are also said to have escaped justice because he pulled officers off investigating them to concentrate on his 'immigration obsession'.

On top of that litany, the mass abuse of Latinos' civil rights under the Arpaio regime is set to cost Arizona taxpayers upward of \$90 million in compensation.

The scandal-soaked sheriff was also one of the earliest proponents of the 'Birther' slur – the false story that Barack Obama wasn't born in the US and wasn't entitled to be president (an easily discredited smear that The Donald himself picked up and cynically ran with early in his own campaign for the presidency). It has now emerged that Arpaio illegally wasted state funds on trying to discredit Obama's Hawaii birth records.

Ironically, last November, just as his pal Trump won the White House and narrowly captured Arizona, voters there booted their brutal, maverick sheriff out of office.

Then, last month a defiant Arpaio was convicted of criminal contempt by a federal judge over his refusal to obey earlier court orders to halt detention practices that amounted to illegal 'racial profiling'. Until Trump stepped in to pardon him last Friday, he was facing a



Pardoned former Maricopa County sheriff Joe Arpaio and Donald Trump

Photos: Getty

stretch in one of his old prisons.

Arpaio apparently saw himself as a local American version of the Philippines strongman president Rodrigo Duterte, a man who takes the law into his own hands, including rejoicing in extra-judicial killings and mocking those who defend judicial and democratic norms and protest at the violation of human rights.

It's another common bond with his pal POTUS, of course, who has heaped praise on Duterte and another strongman leader accused of massive abuses of human rights and legal process, Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

As the *New Yorker* magazine put it: "Former Sheriff Arpaio represents in miniature what the President would like to be more maximally — a successful American authoritarian."

The *New York Times* warned it put Trump "in uncharted waters and the move could signal others who committed the same offences could not be punished". While, in a scathing editorial, *New York* magazine branded it the president's

"gravest abuse of power yet".

Even the normally pro-Trump *Washington Examiner* weighed in with an editorial accusing him of "abusing" his pardoning powers to "aid a friend and political ally". Arguing that POTUS had undermined "law and order".

Not that Arpaio was backward in coming forward to thank the president. Tweeting as @RealSheriffJoe, he wrote: "Thank you @realdonaldtrump for seeing my conviction for what it is: a political witch hunt by holdovers in the Obama justice department!" He also tweeted an appeal for public donations for help paying his legal bills and, by all accounts, a flood of money quickly poured in from far right, white nationalist sources.

But if pardoning Sheriff Joe played well for The Donald with his shrinking core support base, it also helped forge an alarmed alliance of Capitol Hill Republicans and Democrats in condemning it. And the *Washington Examiner* wasn't alone in being a right-wing, previously pro-Trump MSM voice to take offence, a twist that POTUS won't

EXPERTISE

A PRESIDENT

BATTERED

BY

STORMS

OF

HIS

OWN

MAKING

find so easy to blame on his favoured, conspiratorial 'liberal fake news media' enemy.

Among the senior Republicans to disown Trump's action have been House Speaker Paul Ryan and Arizona's two Republican senators, John McCain and Jeff Flake, both vocal critics of POTUS. Meanwhile secretary of state Rex Tillerson privately expressed his 'disgust' over the pardoning.

Behind the scenes, Trump's response has been to sound out more sympathetic, hard-right candidates to oppose Flake and McCain (if the cancer-stricken veteran who thwarted his Obamacare repeal bill recovers and is able to run for re-election in future).

But Republican party strategists see it very differently. In Arizona, they fear the 'Arpaio Affair' will trigger a record turnout among Latino voters that will cost them the state – unless loyalty to Flake and McCain, born out of their open hostility to Trump's presidency, somehow saves the day.

Meanwhile an unrepentant Trump has

shrugged aside his critics and advisers to continue defending Arpaio personally and his own pardoning decision.

Presidential tweets lionized Sheriff Joe as an "American patriot doing his job" and declaring: "Sheriff Joe loves our country. Sheriff Joe protected our borders. And Sheriff Joe was very unfairly treated by the Obama administration. I stand by my pardon". Only branding Sheriff Joe's victims 'bad hombres' was missing from that presidential origami twist on truth and the law.

POTUS also sought to compare his pardoning of Arpaio with Obama's clemency toward Chelsea Manning over the leaking of classified information to Wikileaks. But again Trump got his facts wrong, suggesting Obama had pardoned Manning when, in fact, he only reduced her prison sentence *WITHOUT* issuing a pardon.

But most senior Republicans share the view of distinguished political scientist Andrew Rudalevige, who wrote: "Arpaio was convicted for doing the opposite of

STORM HARVEY'S QUESTIONS FOR TRUMP

It was the week that saw Donald Trump confronted by the biggest domestic natural disaster of his presidency so far, just as North Korea ratcheted up the temperature on the international stage by firing that ballistic missile across Japan. Indeed some US intelligence strategists speculate that Kim Jong-un had deliberately rescheduled the timing of his provocative action to capitalise on the US president's Hurricane Harvey crisis, with unprecedented floods engulfing the Texas coast.

To his credit, Trump's handling of the crisis in the Lone Star State was far more surefooted than George W Bush's catastrophic response to Hurricane Katrina's devastation of New Orleans. Even if The Donald can't match Obama in the compassionate, simpatico oratory stakes.

That said, the fallout from Hurricane Harvey inevitably put the focus back on President Trump's dismissal of climate change as a phoney story created by China, his decision to pull the US out of the Paris agreement and his curbing of President Obama's flood protection budget. Critics are now poised to demand that POTUS's pledge to secure hefty congressional funding for the massive relief and rebuilding programme Texas desperately needs is part-funded by him dropping his own call on a reluctant Capitol Hill to meet the cost of his controversial Mexican Wall project.

At home and abroad the only certainty is uncertainty as dangerously testing days loom for a volatile and unpredictable POTUS under heavy pressure on several fronts.

his job. As a sworn officer of law enforcement, he violated the law and then ignored court orders designed to bring his policies in line with statutory and constitutional mandates."

Likewise Robert Bauer, former White House counsel under Obama, slammed Trump for going ahead after his Attorney General Sessions had refused to drop the prosecution of the sheriff. "This was the president's backhand way of doing what he wanted to do at the front end. He just wanted to kill the prosecution off, he couldn't do it one way, so he ended up doing it the other way. This is just another vivid demonstration of how far removed from an appropriate exercise of the presidential pardon power this was," says Bauer.

Now a professor at New York University School of Law, Bauer added: "Trump disrupted the operation of the criminal justice process to score a political point... he believes that the 'complete power to pardon' gives him all the space he needs and requires only the most meaningless explanation of his action. But he's miscalculated if he imagines it will not come back to haunt him."

Richard Painter, who was ethics lawyer for Republican president George W Bush, said Trump had bypassed the "normal" procedure where pardons are recommended by the Justice Department and then recommended to the president.

"It was done for political reasons and it is no coincidence that it was done on the same day as the firing of Sebastian Gorka. The problem is the alt-right who are obsessed with ethnic supremacy and need something else to distract them, so they threw the pardon for Sheriff Joe into the mix.

"I don't think the pardon will be challenged immediately but we have potentially serious constitutional issues with President Trump. If he tries to use pardons with the Russia investigation, potentially pardoning members of his family, there will be a constitutional ruckus."

Bradley Moss, a senior specialist national security attorney, went further, publicly warning: "By demonstrating his

willingness to issue pardons without bothering with the trouble of bureaucratic due diligence or concerns about political backlash, President Trump has sent out a subtle and implicit message to people like Flynn and Manafort: Hang tight, I have your back."

A clear indicator, suggests Moss, that the president wants the potentially dangerous duo of ousted key associates to co-operate as little as possible with the Mueller investigation in return for dangled carrot of a presidential pardon down the line.

Cecilia Wang, deputy legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union, put it this way: "With his pardon of Arpaio, Trump has chosen lawlessness over justice, division over unity, hurt over healing. Once again, the president has acted in support of illegal, failed immigration enforcement practices that target people of colour and have been struck down by the courts. His pardon of Arpaio is a presidential endorsement of racism."

With the Arpaio storm coming so soon after the toxic backlash over his mishandling of the Charlottesville carnage, senior Republican party figures are now privately discussing whether the GOP can risk going into the 2020 presidential election with The Donald as its candidate, even if he survives the Russian Connection investigations.

US electoral history shows that a party does badly if a president seeking re-election faces an internal challenge for its candidacy. But as one senior Republican strategist put it to me: "The way he's behaving and the way the opinion polls are going, Trump could prove the exception to that rule. Or, put it another way, it could make the difference between a real chance and no chance in 2020."

So, could Arpaio turn out to be the adoring sheriff who accidentally helped shoot the president out of office? Now that would be the irony to trump all ironies.

■ Paul Connew is a media commentator, broadcaster and former *Sunday Mirror* editor

EXPERTISE

DEMOCRACY AND ITS CRISIS

- BY AC GRAYLING

In the first part of an exclusive serialisation of his brilliant new book, Britain's foremost philosopher describes how we stand on the precipice of losing democracy in Britain

For many centuries the idea of democracy was regarded with revulsion and fear, and not just by ruling elites who saw it as against their interests. This prevented the mass of people from having any say in the government of their communities and their own lives. It took much time, ingenuity and careful thought to devise institutions and practices which would make the democratic expression of preferences translatable into government that worked.

For most of recorded history political power has been held by the few over the many. It is easy to imagine that in prehistoric conditions, in small bands of people, an instinctive democracy reigned; but it is equally easy to imagine that a strong individual, charismatic or physically powerful or both, exerted leadership rather as alpha individuals do in other animal species – usually males, which suggests that physical strength had much to do with it. Physical strength is one form of power, but so also are wealth, tradition, mystique, taboo, religious attitudes, genealogy – all in their own ways, and more potently still in combination, providing and justifying the rule of one or a few over the rest.

At different points in history this form of political structure has been challenged and, less frequently, replaced by the claim of the many to have more right than the few to hold political power, or – in terms both more practical and accurate – to be its source. In fifth century BCE Athens this claim took its fundamental form, which is democracy. The word itself originates in the ancient Greek *demokratia*, from *demos* 'the people', *kratos* 'rule': 'rule by the people'.

We would not now recognize Athenian democracy as a paradigm, for in effect it was the replacement of a smaller 'few' by a larger 'few'. The franchise was held by adult male citizens only, a minority in the city, excluding women, slaves and *xenoi* (non-citizens), groups which between them probably made up at least three-quarters of the city's adult population.

But Athenian democracy was enough to alarm some of its leading contemporary thinkers, notably Plato, who saw the danger in it: that it could too readily degenerate into what is called ochlocracy, that is, mob rule, driven in unruly fashion by emotion, self-interest,

prejudice, anger, ignorance and thoughtlessness into rash, cruel, destructive and self-destructive action. The danger is even more apparent when one considers the power of demagoguery, of manipulation of crowd sentiment by fiery rabble-rousing speeches (or their later forms such as, for example, tendentious election advertising) which target those very things – emotion and prejudice – so inimical to producing sound government. This danger is in reality different from ochlocracy, for this is manipulation by a hidden oligarchy – a group using the excuse or the fig leaf of appeals to democratic licence to carry out their agenda.

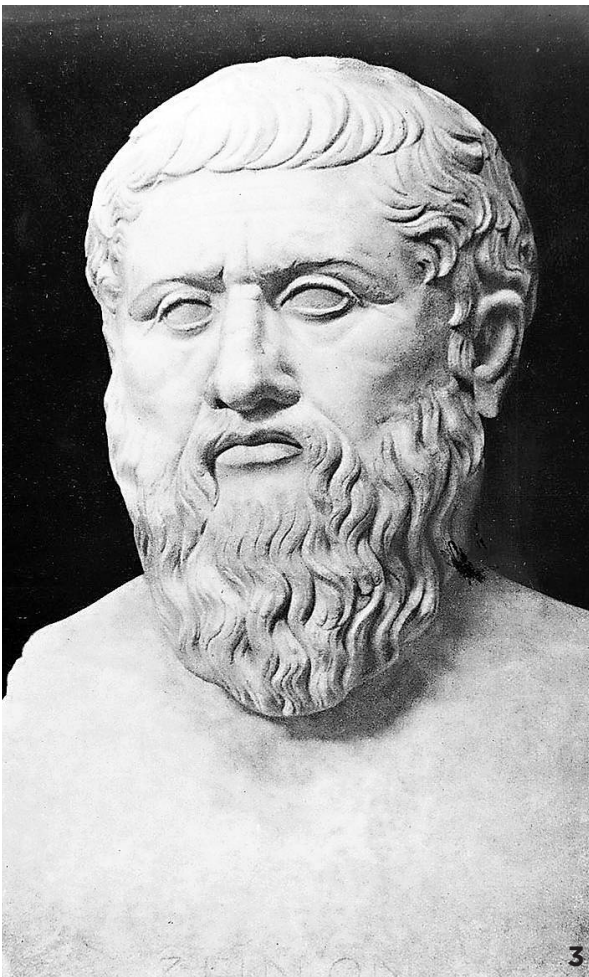
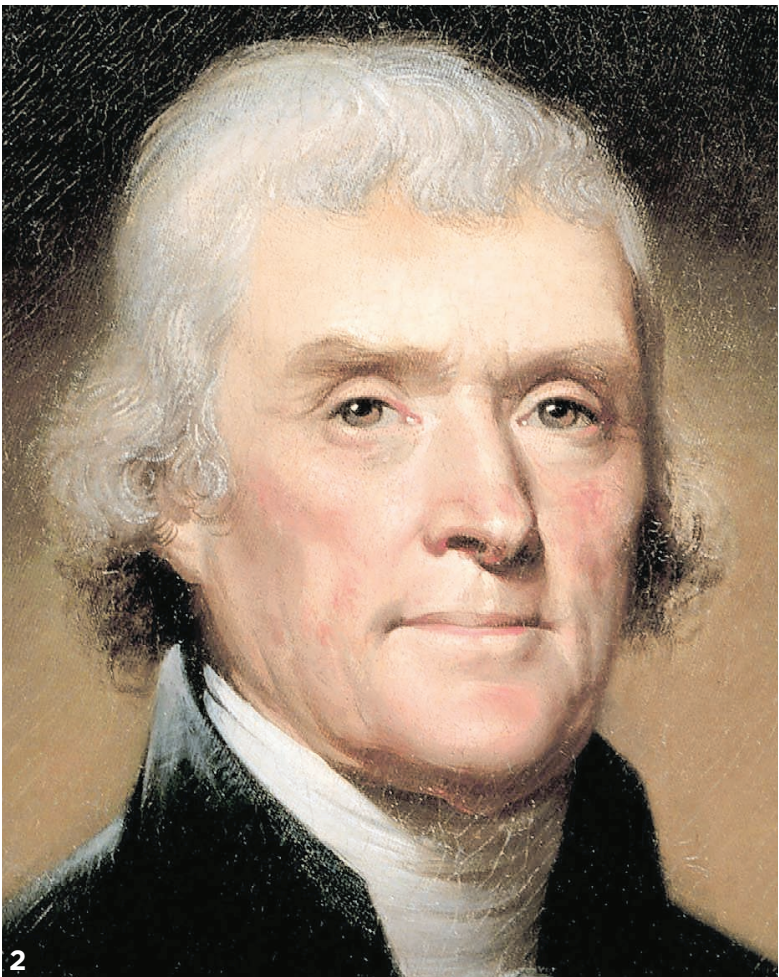
The Platonic anxiety about democracy has resonated throughout history. The remark attributed to Winston Churchill could be a summary of Plato's own view: that 'the strongest argument against democracy is a few minutes' conversation with any voter', the point being that it reveals the ignorance, self-interest, short-termism and prejudice typical of too many voters. The American satirist H. L. Mencken put the point more trenchantly: 'Democracy is a pathetic belief in the collective wisdom of individual ignorance.'

Of course these cynical views miss the point, and perhaps deliberately so, which the ideal of democracy reaches for. Yet at the same time, in the powerfully justifiable claim of the many to be the holders or source of political authority, and in the danger of the collapse of this authority into either ochlocracy or hidden oligarchy, lies the acute dilemma of democracy itself. Until the seventeenth century scarcely any thought was given to how democracy might be made possible by means of institutions and practices that would honour the right of the many to be the source of political and governmental authority in their society, while securing that arrangement against the danger of ochlocracy or hidden oligarchy. How – this was and remains the burning question – is this to be done?

To appreciate the importance of the question, one need only reflect that if the practical sense as well as the self-interest of most polities in recorded history seems to have been that of two kinds of tyranny – rule by a dictator or a dictatorial clique, and rule by a mob – the former is, unhappily and unavoidably,



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preferable for reasons too obvious for its proponents to enumerate.

Indeed in the opinion of those such as Plato, monarchy and open oligarchy (respectively rule by one and by a few) are less likely to degenerate into tyranny than is democracy, because monarchs and oligarchs would see that their tenure of power relies at least in part on the implicit acceptance of their rule by the populace, which cannot be secured by the exercise of coercive power alone.

For Plato the demos, by contrast, a numerous body without a head, is too vulnerable to being captured by the emotion of the moment, by the phenomenon of the 'madness of crowds' which panic or anger can prompt, or which demagogues are by definition skilled at arousing and exploiting.

What Plato did not consider was whether there are ways of so structuring the application of popular consent to the administration of government that the benefits of democracy can be harnessed without risk of it collapsing into either mob rule or tyranny. This work, of considering and then constructing practical means to this end, only fully began with the devisers of the US Constitution in the late eighteenth century. Of course the ideas at stake in this work were not new: the Levellers of seventeenth-century England had eloquently made the case for a form of democracy with universal male suffrage, and their disputants in the Putney Debates of 1647 made an alternative case for a more restricted because more conditional property-based franchise. The latter indirectly issued in the claim in the English Bill of Rights of 1688 that 'the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons' (with the Crown jointly constituting Parliament) 'represent the people' – although the England of 1688 was considerably less a democracy even than Henry Ireton and Oliver Cromwell had envisaged at Putney.

But it was Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and their colleagues in revolutionary America, and in Europe Benjamin Constant, Alexis de Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill, who formulated ideas of democracy which influenced practical historical events leading to the emergence of increasingly democratic constitutions. A common theme both of the theory and the practice was that the dilemma of democracy could be resolved by so arranging the institutions and practices of the political state that they could reconcile two key aims: that the ultimate source of political authority should lie in democratic assent, and that

Turn to page 30

(1) Sir Winston Churchill - portrait of British Prime Minister giving the 'V' victory sign, 1874-1965
(2) American Founding Father and President, Thomas Jefferson
(3) Greek philosopher Plato
(4) The Surrender of Lord Cornwallis, an oil painting by John Trumbull.

Photos: Culture Club/Getty/Contributed

“THE PLATONIC ANXIETY ABOUT DEMOCRACY HAS RESONATED THROUGHOUT HISTORY. THE REMARK ATTRIBUTED TO WINSTON CHURCHILL COULD BE A SUMMARY OF PLATO'S OWN VIEW: THAT 'THE STRONGEST ARGUMENT AGAINST DEMOCRACY IS A FEW MINUTES' CONVERSATION WITH ANY VOTER'”

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From page 29

government should be and could be sound and responsible.

What emerged in practical terms from these considerations was the realisation that democracy, in whatever form, is only part of what would make for sound government, though it is obviously a very important and indeed necessary part. But herein lies a key: democracy is necessary, but not by itself sufficient. More is needed, both in the way of further necessities, and of desiderata. Necessities are: constitutional checks and balances placing limits on the power of both legislature and executive, and providing remedies when the limits are breached. Desiderata are: an informed and reflective electorate, and a responsible media as a vehicle for distributing that information and providing a platform for debate and analysis.

The briefest of surveys shows by how much the major democracies fell short in respect of both the necessities and the desiderata – and the years 2016–17 demonstrate how that underachievement led to a breakdown of the compromise offered as a solution to the dilemma of democracy.

The argument, therefore, is this: the political history of what we can call the 'Western liberal democracies' is the history of the development and application of a compromise which resolves democracy's dilemma.

It is in my view unarguably right that the model of democracy forged by this compromise is by quite a long way the least bad of a lot of bad systems, and we do well to preserve it if we can.

The election of Donald Trump in the US, and the 'Brexit' referendum and what followed it in the UK, most acutely illustrate what happens when there is a failure to cleave to the underlying principles of representative democracy.

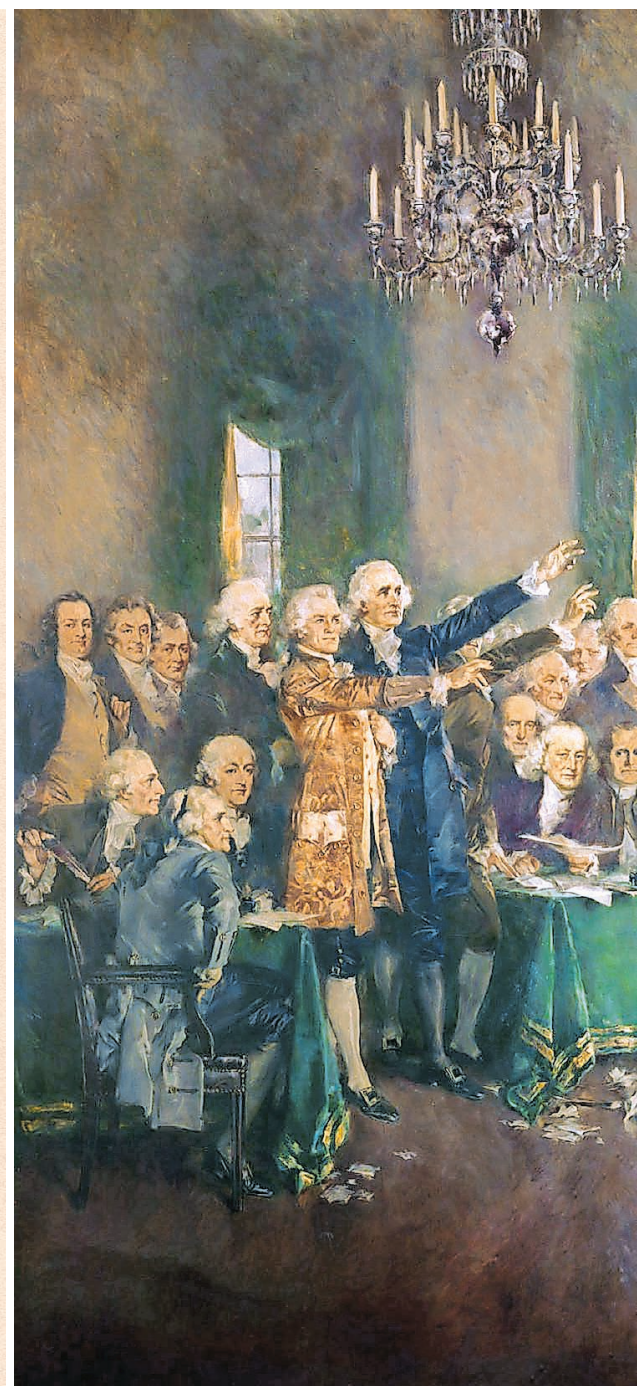
Both the UK and US, in their different ways, illustrate the emergence and application of ideas designed to resolve the dilemma of democracy, but the word 'democracy' denotes a number of different political systems, some of them anything but democratic in any meaningful sense of the term; for a speaking example, the official designation of North Korea is 'the Democratic People's Republic of Korea'. The democracy-allusive idea that 'the people' are in control of their country's government and politics – in some sense of 'the people' and some sense of 'control' – is claimed by such designations as 'the People's Republic of China'. This formulation was a commonplace of nomenclature for pre-1989 communist regimes; the People's Republics of Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary and Mongolia all dropped the democracy-allusive word 'people' after 1989 in remodelling themselves on the multiparty electoral and parliamentary systems of the Western liberal democracies. The implication is that the formula was an example of Orwellian Newspeak merely, denoting the opposite of reality.

Whatever the history of regimes to which the word 'democratic' has been applied, the clear intention embodied in the idea of democracy is that it is a political order in which government is chosen and given its authority by the periodically, freely and fairly cast votes of the enfranchised members of the populace, who have a real choice as to



(1) *The Putney Debates*, by Clare Melinsky (2) *The Signing of the Constitution of the United States*, a painting by Howard Chandler Christy, April 1940 (3) Students clean the steps in front of the statues of late North Korean leaders Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-Il at Mansu Hill as the country marks 'Victory Day' in Pyongyang on July 27.

Photos: ED JONES/AFP/Getty/contributed



whom to give their vote. In modern democracies the franchise is extended as widely as is consistent with decisions about who should have and who should be denied a vote, and on what grounds; such decisions include questions about a suitable minimum voting age. Until a century ago qualification for the franchise included how much property a person owned and that person's sex. The idea behind the property qualification was that the vote should be reserved to those with a palpable stake in the state and its economy; the idea behind the sex qualification was that only men were likely to be sufficiently informed and rational to know how to use a vote properly. Needless to say, abolition of these qualifications could not have come soon enough.

The principle underlying democracy thus understood is that it gives the enfranchised an important say in the running of their society, through

EXPERTISE



mechanisms which allow for peaceful changes of government. A central feature of a democratic order is the rule of law, and the idea that the law applies equally to all and its remedies are equally available to all.

Due process is key, protecting against the arbitrary application or withholding of legal provisions. But this is not the only central feature. A set of civil liberties is essential to the operation of democracy, such as freedom of expression, the right to assembly, and liberty in respect of political choices. The mechanisms by which the enfranchised elect a government, and by which the government is thereafter constrained in what it can do, are highly important. Each vote should have equal weight (a condition not satisfied by a first-past-the-post electoral system), and there should be clear constitutional provisions governing the exercise of governmental power and discretion (in the UK there is insufficient such clarity because the constitution is unwritten and consists in an inchoate mixture of custom and statute).

All this is essential to democracy. Is it enough? Not yet. Three further intimately connected essentials – the proper operation of the democracy, the quality of the electorate, and the quality of the elected – would close the gap between aspiration and the nearest thing to the ideal that humanity can achieve in this sphere. I suggest that it is in the breakdown of these further essentials that the crisis of contemporary democracy consists.

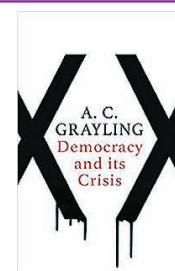
Allowing democracy to be corrupted, as it has been, is a betrayal of our forebears' long and arduous struggle to achieve the rights and liberties founded on democracy, and a danger to our present and our future.

This last apocalyptic-seeming remark is offered in all soberness. It is very easy to lose what is of real value by inattention, laziness, the sloppiness induced by overconfidence and distraction by trivia. While we look at the screens of our televisions and mobile phones, others with agendas have their fingers in the pockets of our democracy, on the steering wheel of our democracy, on the keys to our democracy, on the credit cards of our democracy. As I write this in the spring of 2017, and as a motivation for writing it, I take it to be the case that the United Kingdom is in the throes of a politically illegitimate effort – the so-called 'Brexit' – by the right wing of a political movement to effect dramatic constitutional changes which they could not achieve as a self-standing political party in a standard general election.

In the United States, at the same time, there is a new President who is by a long chalk one of the worst qualified and worst equipped individuals ever to be voted into the White House, 'defeating' – though with three million fewer votes, courtesy of the Electoral College arrangement – a candidate who by a long chalk is one of the best qualified and most relevantly experienced individuals ever to stand for the White House. By themselves these facts suggest something has gone seriously wrong in the state of democracy. They threaten to be the opening gambits in the loss of democracy altogether. Democracy must be reclaimed, in the form worked out by some of the best minds in the history of our civilization, before the opportunity to reclaim it passes.

“THE ELECTION OF TRUMP IN THE US, AND THE 'BREXIT' REFERENDUM AND WHAT FOLLOWED... ILLUSTRATE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THERE IS A FAILURE TO CLEAVE TO THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

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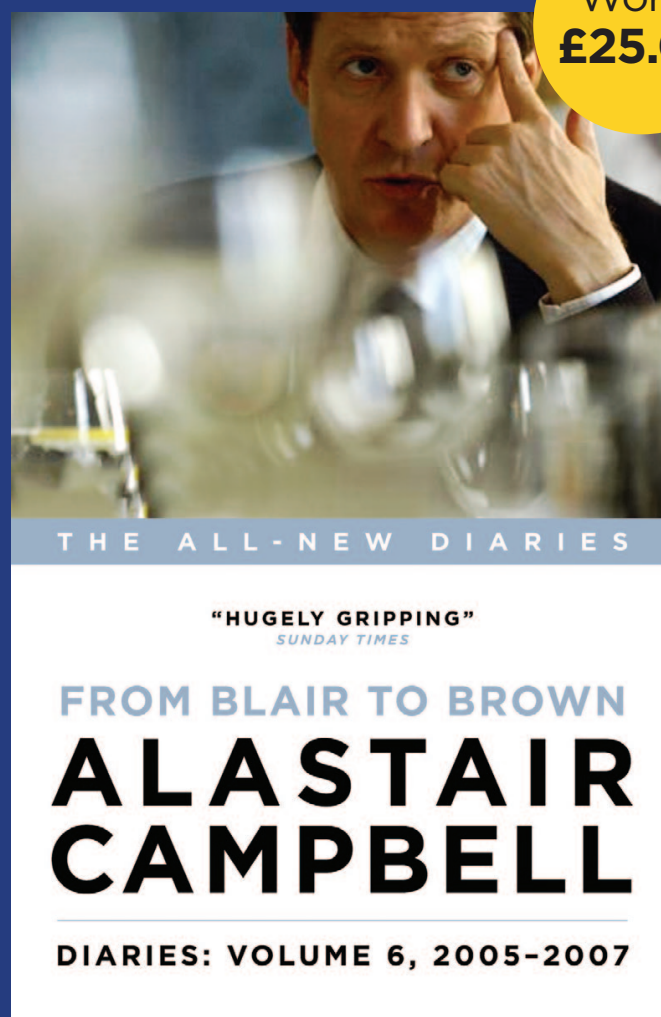
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EXPERTISE

Mitch Benn

Comedian,
Musician,
Writer

Ok, this is intriguing... Keir Starmer has turned up in the *Observer* declaring what certainly LOOKS like a shift and/or backtrack in Labour's Brexit strategy, specifically that the UK should remain within the single market and customs union for a "transitional period", whatever that means.

Speculation has already begun to percolate through the various social networks that this is just the first step in what may turn out to be Labour's gradual process of turning away from Brexit altogether; to reduce the degree of actual change to something so minor that we either don't much notice it or indeed decide it's not worth bothering with.

I think this is – as yet – blithely optimistic, or, of course, pessimistic, if you're Nigel Farage. He's been fulminating away about Labour's "betrayal". While driving Nigel Farage nuts is not, in itself, sufficient reason to approve of a policy (that way lies the madness of American conservatives, who these days would eagerly saw their own feet off if they thought it would make liberals angry), it's always nice to see that toad face crease in huffing indignation. In fact I wouldn't be surprised if Starmer's going back on his previous position on this issue enrages Farage so much he unresigns as UKIP leader for the third (or is it fourth?) time.

The reason I think it's premature to celebrate Labour's possible coming to its collective senses over Brexit is that its position heretofore wasn't born either of electoral calculations or of grudging respect for the referendum result, whatever pro-Labour voters want to believe; rather it's an accurate representation of Jeremy Corbyn and (especially) John McDonnell's feelings on the matter. They're not faking this anti-EU thing, kids. They've got form.

Corbyn himself has a career-long record of voting against British involvement in Europe, from voting against both the Maastricht and Lisbon treaties, to asking for David Cameron to invoke Article 50 the day after the



referendum, to using three-line whips to stop his own MPs from opposing the Article 50 bill or calling for the UK to stay in the single market. It's not an act, it's not a fudge, it's not "the long game", he REALLY doesn't like the EU. Starmer and others may try to introduce some practicality – some REALITY – into the process, but that won't do anything to overcome that great weight of antipathy towards the European project at the top of the party.

The general wisdom is that while right-wing antipathy to Europe tends to be

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn speaks during a rally at Quadrant shopping centre in Coatbridge on August 25, 2017

Photo: PA

jingostic and fuelled by imperial nostalgia, left-wing anti-Europeanism is all about the perception of the EU as a capitalist cartel and, as such, an impediment to the socialist utopia of collectivisation and public ownership. I can see how this works as a principle, but as with many political principles, the facts don't bear it out. It's hard to sell the idea of Europe as this anti-socialist bulwark when it's our friends on the continent who are still, by and large, riding on nationalised trains, availing themselves of entirely (not even sneakily)

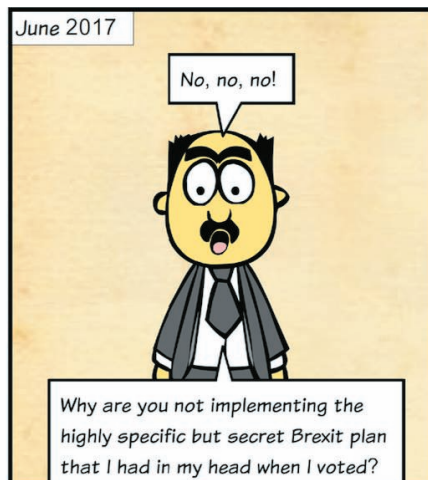
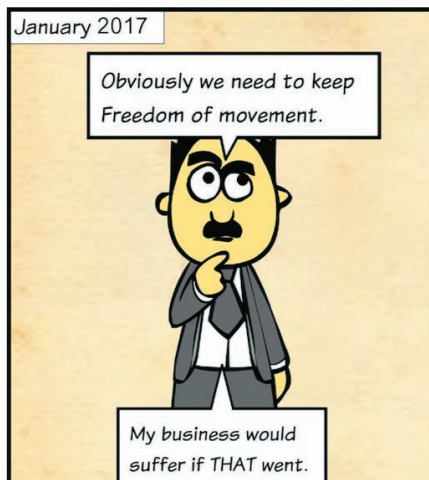
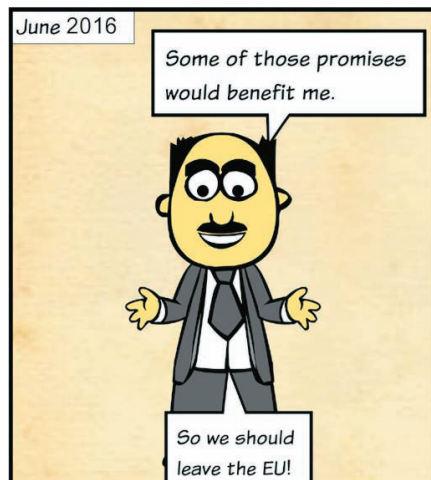
un-privatised state health care, sending their kids to well-funded state schools and, as often as not, uncomplainingly shelling out more of their money in taxes to pay for all this.

All of this notwithstanding, it is possible that it's finally occurred to Corbyn – or at least someone in his inner circle – the extent to which he's cutting his own throat here in terms of electoral prospects. While Labour's performance in June's farcical snap election astonished those on all sides of the political spectrum, the party will – if it has ANY grip on reality – be aware of two things.

Firstly, that they still LOST. Not as catastrophically as expected, but Labour did, in fact, LOSE the general election and the Conservatives are still – barely – in government. Secondly, that this not-victory was due at least as much to the obvious disarray and incompetence of the Conservative government as to any great electoral genius on Labour's part, and that the most obvious manifestation of this incompetence is the three-course dog's breakfast they're making of the Brexit process. Indeed, those of us who were paying attention realised that the election was probably only called in order to minimise the damage to the Tory party when the true costs, both economic and social, of Brexit become horribly clear after 2019.

Now while I realise that Jeremy Who Is Called Corbyn would never stoop so low as to consider anything so tawdry as polling data, that He would never soil His hands on a focus group report, surely at some point even he is going to realise that you don't capitalise on your opponents' folly by promising to reproduce it. That you don't offer an alternative by offering the same thing. That there's no point being the opposition if you don't, you know, OPPOSE.

Right now Brexit is the only game in town. And it's a unique threat; over in the USA Trump may be defying parody as he descends ever further into cartoonish paranoid villainy, but after eight years at most he's out (even if he succeeds in declaring himself King and crowning Ivanka on his way out – we all know that's what he'd do if he could). Brexit, whether ushered in by idiots in blue ties or idiots in red ties, will do untold damage for GENERATIONS. And if Corbyn can't perceive that, or regard it as something worth changing his mind for, then not only does he not deserve to govern, but the country doesn't deserve to be governed by him.



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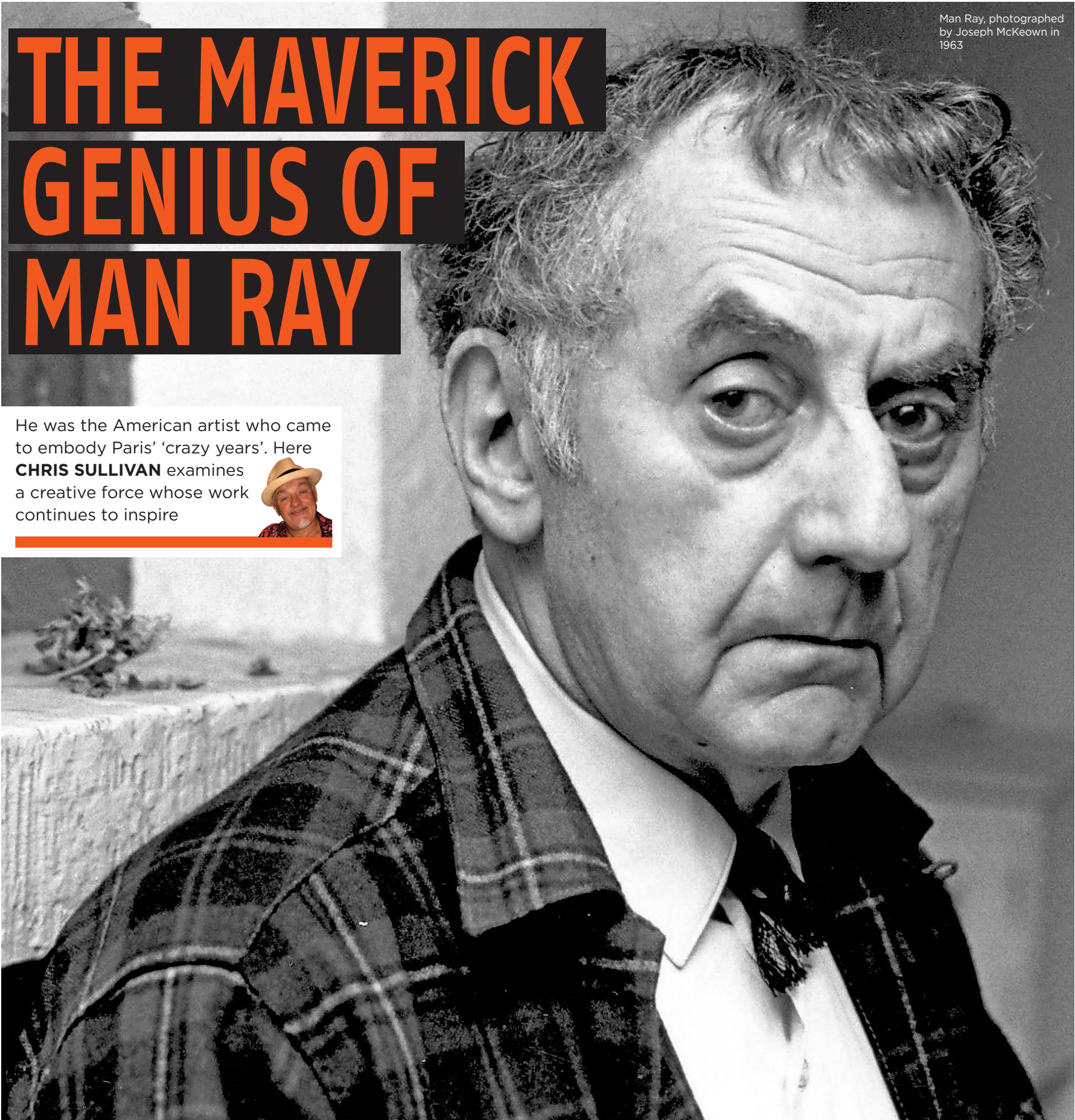
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THE MAVERICK GENIUS OF MAN RAY

Man Ray, photographed
by Joseph McKeown in
1963

He was the American artist who came to embody Paris' 'crazy years'. Here **CHRIS SULLIVAN** examines a creative force whose work continues to inspire



EUROFILE ART

Man Ray is a giant in the art world. His work, *The Gift* – a simple wrought iron clothes ‘iron’ with nails attached to its surface – hit Dada firmly on its dichotomous head while his photographic portraits, unconventional with their off-kilter framing and perspective, are not only ground-breaking but define Paris in the 1920s and ‘30s as no other chronicler ever could.

A pantheon of 20th century artists and geniuses drawn from his immediate circle of friends and associates, his subjects, among many others, include James Joyce from Ireland whose book, *Ulysses* was the first word in Modernist Literature, Normand Marcel Duchamp who created the blueprint for art as we now know it and some of the greatest composers to ever live, such as Russian Igor Stravinsky. Then there was the 20th century’s most important painter Picasso, the architect who shaped the modern world, Le Corbusier, and the two fashion designers who forever changed the way women looked – Coco Chanel and Roman Elsa Schiaparelli. And what is apparent from these shots is that Man Ray was not some voyeur wheeled into record these transnational malcontents. He was one of them.

Ray was born Michael Emmanuel Radnitzky in southern Philadelphia in 1890 to a Russian Jewish tailor. The family moved to Williamsburg, Brooklyn in 1897 where, due to prevalent anti-Semitism, they changed their surname to Ray. As young Emmanuel was known as Manny, the change to Man Ray was but a step away.

After showing much promise in all things artistic he – having worked in his father’s sweat shop and much to his parent’s chagrin – settled on life as an artist, eking a living doing the odd illustration and enrolling in the Ferrer art school in the city.

Conveniently placed, by the age of 23 Ray was well versed in the new European art. He had been enough of a regular at eminent photographer and modern art advocate Alfred Stieglitz’s 291 Gallery at 291 Fifth Avenue, to paint the man’s portrait. Stieglitz is now regarded as one of the world’s greatest-ever photographers, responsible for breaking the likes of Matisse and Francis Picabia in the US. Ray’s decidedly Cubist painting of him offers an inkling as to his own future.

On February 17, 1913, Ray visited the Armory Show, one of the biggest and most important art exhibitions of the early 20th century. Held in the armoury of the US National Guard, in Manhattan, it featured works by, among many others, Cezanne, Van Gogh, Matisse, Picasso, Brancusi and most notably, Marcel Duchamp, with his sensational, *Nude Descending a Staircase*.

Undeniably, Man Ray was so taken by Duchamp’s work that he changed tack and decided that the Frenchman’s stance as an art terrorist who used the form to provoke and disarm was his only way forward.

The following year, he married the Belgian poet Adon Lacroix. Europe was beckoning.

But first, Ray moved out to an art colony in Ridgefield, New Jersey, and had his first solo exhibition in 1915. The same year he met Duchamp, who had emigrated to the US from Paris after the outbreak of the First World War. Though the two men were very different –



‘Coco’ Chanel photographed by Man Ray c1935

Photo: Granger, NYC /TopFoto

“A great big boisterous heaving genius that never slept, Paris, in the 1920s, was the hub of the artistic world

Duchamp was privileged, classically taught and cerebral while Ray was disadvantaged, intuitive and jolly – their fraternal friendship, based on a penchant for the subversive and an overwhelming desire to invert and upset the status quo, grew.

In 1916 Man Ray, under the Frenchman’s massive influence, ditched traditional painting and assembled his first proto Dada object, *Self Portrait*. Consequently, their collaboration increased. Man Ray helped Duchamp with *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* (*The Large Glass*), worked on Duchamp’s Kinetic art and photographed Duchamp dressed as a woman as his alter ego, Rrose Sélavy. In 1921 this odd couple published *New York Dada* – a magazine that, although devoted to the form, was met with indifference so they both upped and moved to Paris. “Dada cannot live in New York,” proclaimed Ray, “All New York is Dada and will not tolerate a rival.”

As soon as they reached the French capital, Duchamp declared Ray the unofficial photographer of the Dada and Surrealist groups and, even though, the young American was entirely (perhaps befittingly) self-taught, he settled nicely into the role. He then found a home in Montparnasse (the famed artist’s quarter that Lee Miller stated in 1975 was the “centre of everything”) and fell in love with one of the scene’s premier faces, artist’s model and bon viveur, Kiki de Montparnasse. He set about creating his infamous Dadaist collages and photographing Bohemian Paris. Man Ray, was soon at the heart of all that was happening in this city of unlimited possibilities, his studio as much a place to be seen as the famed artist’s hangout as The Café de Flore.

Indeed, artists, outcasts and nonconformists had flocked to Paris after the First World War from all over the world in search of the liberté, égalité and fraternité that so marked the city. A great big boisterous heaving genius that never slept, Paris, in the 1920s, was the hub of the artistic world where debate, single mindedness, sexual experimentation and liberty ruled the roost and whose inhabitants – fiercely proud of their city and its ideologies – fought to preserve such.

During the early 20th century Paris had embraced all things alien including African Art – that fuelled the likes of Picasso and Matisse – and was booming. All was going swimmingly until the First World War when the front line, just 15 miles away, saw the Hun literally breathing down the city’s neck. Thus, when the war was over Parisian’s en masse uttered a great sigh of relief, lived as if every day was their last and discovered a lust for extravagance and hedonism that had the era named, “Les

man Ray

ART EUROFILE



Photogram by Man Ray from *Electricit*, a series of advertising images published by the Parisian Electricity Distribution Company in 1931 Photo: adoc-photos/Corbis via Getty Images

EUROFILE ART



Man Ray with Photokina-Eye. Photo taken by Charles Fraser, 1960

Photo: Fine Art Images / Heritage Images / TopFoto

From page 37

Années Folles” or the “crazy years”. To add to the melee, refugees such as the White Russians flocked there to escape persecution alongside Jews who’d escaped the pogroms in the Ukraine.

In addition, hundreds of black American soldiers simply stayed on after the war. They loved Paris and Paris loved them while at home they were still being lynched. The French capital, with its burgeoning egalitarianism and its fascination with African arts, became the destination for these Afro-Americans until no hip party was complete without a black jazz band and Montmartre became known as Harlem sur Seine. Others followed such as 19-year-old Josephine Baker, who opened at La Revue Nègre at the Theatre Des Champs Elysees in 1925 and, often appearing in an outfit consisting only of fake bananas, became the toast of Paris.

Writers including John Dos Passos and Ernest Hemingway had also stayed on after military service only to be joined by among others Ezra Pound, James Joyce, F Scott Fitzgerald, Henry Miller, Samuel Becket and Anaïs Nin, while artists of every nationality congregated in this city of lights.

Appropriately, many a wealthy American decamped to the city. Some were at all not happy with Prohibition, others were gay, oppressed and harassed. Cole Porter, composer of such standards as *I Get a Kick out of You* moved there as did banking heir and poet (and extreme hedonist) Harry Crosby, heiresses Nancy Cunard and Peggy Guggenheim and real estate beneficiary Gertrude Stein. In 1920 there were an estimated 8,000 American expats living in the city but by 1925 they numbered 40,000. Indeed Paris, with its all night bars, eccentric sex shows, cross-dressing, gay bathhouses, naked saturnalias, brothels and overt cocaine must have seemed like Heaven.

Paris became this great big melting pot where race, colour and creed were of no consequence and where anything and everything went – the only common denominator being that everyone was proud to be a part of what was then the greatest and most tolerant city on earth.



Man Ray's
Erotique Violée
(1933)

ART EUROFILE



(1) Man Ray with his piece titled *Smoking Device* – the artist demonstrating the practicality of the art form by blowing cigarette smoke through six feet of tubing wound around a pipe rack (2) The artist in 1963

Photos: Bettmann Archive / Getty Images



Certainly, Ray's work in Paris between the world wars leaves one with an indelible impression of avant-garde Paris that, peppered with moneyed aristos slumming it with cross-dressing artists and dandified poets, seems to have been one great big party where sexual ambivalence, eccentric excess and cross-pollination between the arts and artists were not only expected but applauded.

Of course, Ray's photographs were often as mischievous as the era. He played with the medium, used visual puns, and exposed himself to the happenstance of objective chance, being entirely unafraid to turn a mistake into a feature. Namely, both his signature devices "solarisation" and "Rayographs" were the result of error – the former occurred after Lee Miller prematurely turned the studio light while the latter concept was fortuitously realised after he by placed an object such on a sheet of photosensitized paper that he exposed to light.

Looking back, even though he refused to join the Surrealist Movement, Ray's shtick – as illustrated by his photograph, *Le Violin de Ingres* that sees the back of Kiki marked with f-shaped scrolls so that

her figure resembles a violin whose music we could never hear – was fundamentally surreal.

Indeed, as a first-generation American, born of Russian-Jewish parents and raised in Brooklyn, Ray was a natural Surrealist as their membership mirrored the internationality of Paris at the time. Andre Breton was French, Tristan Tzara was Jewish-Romanian, Giorgio di Chirico hailed from Greece, Max Ernst and Méret Oppenheim were German, Joan Miro, Bunuel and Dali were Spanish, Picabia was Cuban-French, Magritte was Belgian and Kansuke Yamamoto obviously Japanese.

Fundamentally libertarian, socialist (with the exception of the right wing Dali, who was expelled for his refusal to take a stance against Franco's fascist regime) and anti imperialist, the group was a reaction against the "rationalism" that had guided European culture and politics in the past. Thus it was considered very groovy and as such, was embraced by creative types the world over.

Man Ray ploughed through the twenties, got over his break-up with Miller in 1932 and continued creating images that are now overwhelmingly familiar (such as *Object to be Destroyed* – his shot photograph of Miller's eye attached to the pendulum of a metronome) and exhibited all over the world while supporting himself and his art with commissions from *Vogue*, *Tatler* and *Vanity Fair*. In 1934 he jumped ship to *Harper's Bazaar* where he was doing rather well contributing a range of incredible fashion images that changed the way people looked at the form. He influenced Norman Parkinson, Horst P Horst and later Erwin Blumenfeld, Martin Munkácsi, Helmut Newton and Guy Bourdin and created the blueprint for all fashion photography to come while his visual puns inspired decades of advertising campaigns. He was on a roll.

His run of good fortune ended with that of his adopted city when, in 1940, the Germans subjugated Paris. Ray, as many other Jews, had no option but to flee the city and return to the US via Lisbon. He then settled in Hollywood, eventually abandoning fashion photography for fear that his commercial reputation was eclipsing his artistic one. He sometimes photographed the era's movie stars but mostly concentrated on painting, occasionally teaching art at the Art Center School in LA.

Man Ray moved back to his beloved Paris in 1951 with his wife of five years, Juliet, and settled back in Montparnasse. By now a French institution, it's said that each time he visited his favourite restaurant, La Coupole, in his dotage dressed in his trademark beret and horn rims, the staff and regulars stood up and applauded. He died in Paris aged 86 of a lung infection. His epitaph reads "unconcerned, but not indifferent".

Man Ray epitomized the liberal, egalitarian, all-embracing ethic that made the Paris of the 1920s the centre of the artistic world and the greatest and most culturally influential decade in history where anything seemed possible. "Its never been my object to record my dreams," he said. "Just the determination to realise them."

■ Chris Sullivan wrote for *The Face*, was *GQ* Style Editor, London correspondent for Italian *Vogue* and has regularly contributed to *The Times*, *The Independent*, *Guardian* and the *FT*



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SPOTLIGHT

THIS WEEK: Rolf Dobelli

Our culture correspondent on a Swiss writer and businessman who has established a reputation as a self-help guru advocating news avoidance - valuing insight and analysis over headlines or whatever happens to be going viral on social media

It first came across Rolf Dobelli's work four years ago when his best-seller *The Art of Thinking Clearly* was published in English for the first time, having been a huge hit in German.

Dobelli is a Swiss author and businessman known as "the self-help guru the Germans love". Dobelli is excellent at pointing out the silly tricks our mind plays on us: why we think "98% fat free" is better than "1% fat" or why we wouldn't want to own a sweater which Hitler had worn, even though we know objectively that evil cannot be transmitted via a woolly jumper.

Dobelli now writes a regular column in Dusseldorf-based newspaper *Handelsblatt*, entitled *Die Kunst des Gutes Lebens* (The Art of the Good Life). His latest piece weighs in on the importance of knowing your own circle of competence (Kompetenzkreis): figure out what you're really good at and do lots of that.

But still his most "sticky" idea is news avoidance. He has written that news is to the mind what sweets are to the body: we think we crave it, but it's just a quick hit with no long-term value. The only writing he values is something that offers insight or long-term analysis, not headlines, sensationalist stories, immediate reaction, rolling news or whatever is going viral on Twitter. He thinks it's OK to have a subscription to the *New Yorker*, for example.

In recent months I've found myself thinking of Dobelli more and more often. He was the first person I came across – and this was long before the Trump and Brexit era – who advocated avoiding news consumption as much as possible. Clearly this is a tricky thing to read about in a newspaper. But Dobelli argues that we only make ourselves anxious by reading about death and destruction. Oliver Burkemann, writing in the *Guardian*, is a fan but not without reservations: "Perhaps my definition of a life well-lived includes engaging with fellow citizens' deaths?" Dobelli counters that news is a waste of time unless it helps you "make a better decision about a serious matter affecting your life, your career or your business".



Rolf Dobelli
Photo: Arne Dedert/
DPA/PA Images

When I interviewed Dobelli in 2013, he hadn't read a newspaper in, I think, about four years. So it's now getting on for a decade. I wonder if he even knows about Donald Trump. Imagine the bliss. In truth, he told me, his friends and colleagues keep him up to date about what's going on in the world: he doesn't avoid conversations or human interaction, he just avoids media reports.

Many of the other ideas in *The Art of Thinking Clearly* now seem extremely prescient. He predicted the "liberal bubble" a long time ago. For example: "We frequently over-estimate unanimity with others, believing that everyone else thinks and feels exactly like we do." This is known as the "false consensus effect". Again, consuming news aimed at us and spending too much time online amplifies this effect: we read what we want to read which makes us believe even more strongly what we want to believe (as well as thinking that many other people feel the same way when perhaps they don't).

Dobelli was born in Lucerne in 1966 and studied economic philosophy at the University of St Gallen in Switzerland. In the late 1990s he established a publishing house and later started to write novels which focused on the

seeming randomness of success in life and in business. This eventually became a major theme for his self-help writing. What do we do to help ourselves in life? And why do we do so many things that are self-sabotaging and self-defeating?

When *The Art of Thinking Clearly* was published, a collection of his columns, it entered Germany's *Der Spiegel* best-seller list at number one and went on to top bestseller lists all over the world from Ireland to South Korea. There was a mild controversy at the time about the influence on Dobelli of the work of the writer Nassim Taleb, a friend of Dobelli's and another thinker who has also questioned the value of news (and long before Dobelli wrote about it), even though Dobelli frequently acknowledged this debt to other writers, including Taleb.

Dobelli's ideas gained ground largely because of a viral piece he wrote about "news avoidance" in which he pointed out that if you just check the news for 15 minutes a few times a day plus a few extra five-minute top-ups, then suddenly you have spent half a day a week on news. (This seems a conservative estimate to me. But perhaps I have a very serious problem.)

Dobelli isn't pretending to be an expert here. He says he's just speaking

from experience and observation: "I realised that news is for the most part bad for you and that's why I'm staying away. I don't pretend to predict how the news is developing or how media is developing. Nobody really understands the internet and therefore social media, so I'm not a theorist at all. I'm just a practical person."

One of his key messages is that news is not about explaining the bigger picture. Reading about what Donald Trump has done this week will not explain why there is such a thing as Donald Trump. "Classic news formats can't explain the generator of events," he says.

Amusingly, he does realise that his theories are not going to cause the demise of news media: "I think it is too deeply ingrained," he says of our desire to know what's going on, even if it doesn't directly affect us in any way. "People want to know about who sleeps with whom, about bomb explosions and airplane crashes". But he still insists that the little picture is an anxiety and a distraction compared to the big picture: "If it is explained to me why the First World War happened, I don't need WWI happening outside my window."

Of course, plenty of people disagree with Dobelli here. Many of us are currently facing our own dilemmas about how much to engage with a complicated, unpredictable and depressing news cycle, aggravated by the relentless rolling news on social media. Madeleine Bunting wrote in the *Guardian* when Dobelli's work was

first published that cutting ourselves off from news results in limited understanding and less engagement in life: "In the end it closes down your world to a very small space of who you know and what they know."

Dobelli's German-speaking audience, however, is still hanging on to his every word. A recent column urges readers to "Take feelings seriously – but not your own" as Dobelli argues that we are easily taken in by our own fleeting emotions, when we would be better served by logic and experience. (While remembering that other people's emotions are always worth observing because empathy is the better part of us.) I'm still digesting his news rules: "News misleads us systematically", "News limits understanding", "News massively increases cognitive errors", "News inhibits thinking." He's definitely got a point. Or even if he hasn't, it's a good excuse for avoiding the news you don't want to know about.



By Viv Groskop

“When I interviewed Dobelli in 2013, he hadn't read a newspaper in, I think, about four years. So it's now getting on for a decade. I wonder if he even knows about Donald Trump. Imagine the bliss.”

CAN DID

The influence of German experimental rock band Can is evident in countless modern acts. But here **IAN WALKER** uncovers what influenced one of the most exciting and innovative rock acts ever



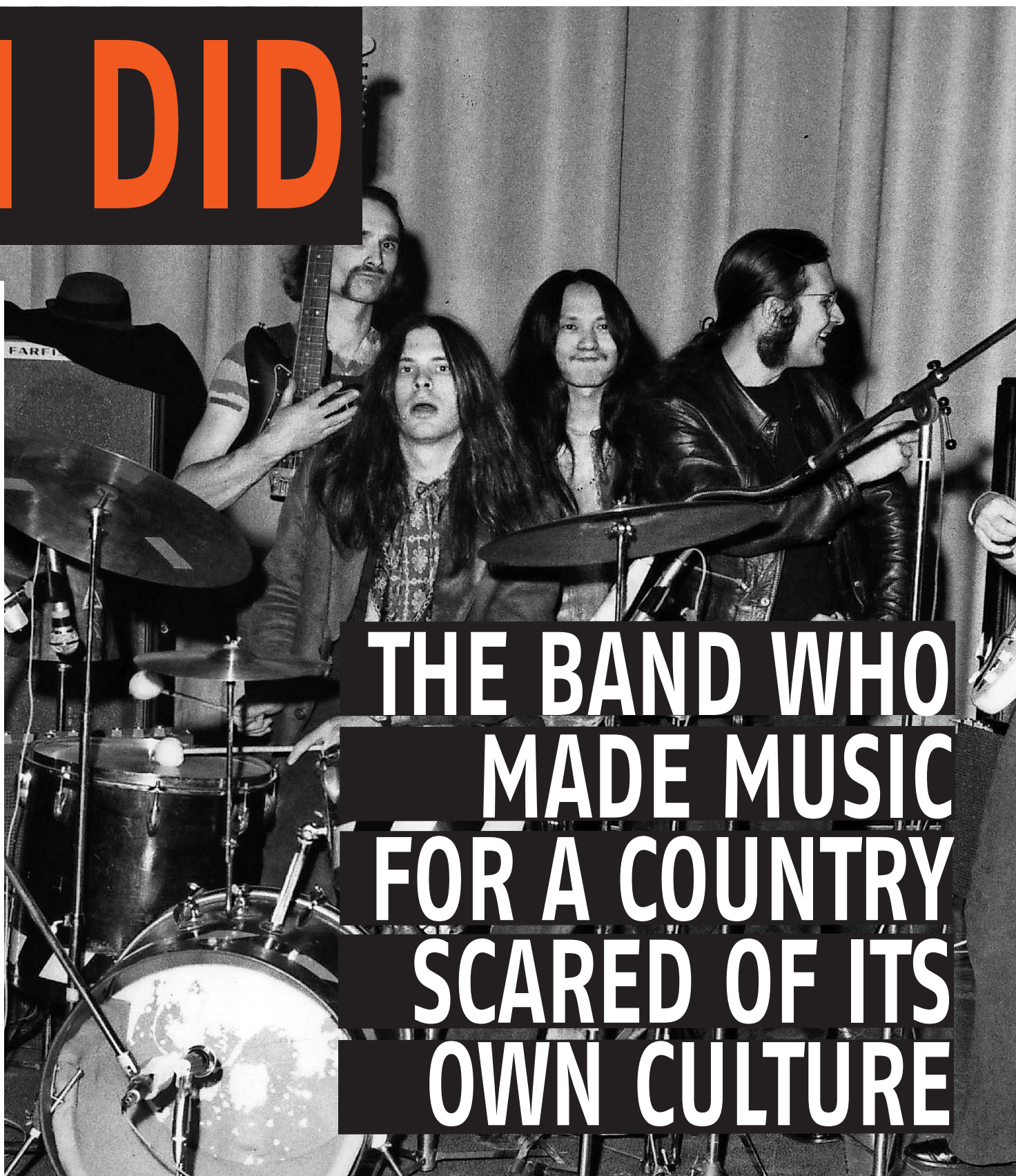
In 1968 the German rock band Can hid themselves away in the Schloss Nörvenich, a castle which was not that far from their hometown of Cologne and while there they began to experiment, rehearse and record their first LP *Monster Movie*.

The members of Can came from disparate musical backgrounds. Two of them, keyboard player Irmin Schmidt and bassist Holger Czukay, were trained musicians in the formal or classical tradition. The drummer Jaki Liebezeit had played in jazz bands ranging from the bebop or hard bop style through to free jazz. Michael Karoli, who at 20 was about 10 years younger than the others, was a rock guitarist. And singer Malcolm Mooney was an African American former doo-wop singer, who was travelling through Europe and Asia partly in search of spiritual enlightenment, and partly to avoid the Vietnam draft.

Can's technique in the castle was to just play and to improvise around a groove or a riff or occasionally to try to bring in the very opposite of that, with broken fragmented sounds like drones, clanks and dissonance. There was no hierarchy in the band, or "no fuhrers" as they put it. The overriding principle was concentration as each band member focussed on trying to find their way into some sort of collective dynamic that would produce an end result.

This non-hierarchical approach didn't mean that there wasn't any fighting, the whole process could be fraught. There are stories of Liebezeit imploring – or threatening – Czukay to strip back to even greater levels of minimal metronomic rhythm. Seeing this, Karoli half jokingly believed Liebezeit to be capable of murder.

Liebezeit is credited with creating the motorik 4/4 drum pattern. In interviews he tells a story about how after performing a jazz set a member of the audience ordered him to play monotonously in future. Liebezeit liked the idea. Turning his back on the freedom



THE BAND WHO MADE MUSIC FOR A COUNTRY SCARED OF ITS OWN CULTURE

Can during the *Tago Mago* period.

Photo: Getty Images

that free jazz offered – it was a freedom that negated the point of music in that it made structure almost pointless – he developed a drumming style which at times was steady and unfussy but was also insistent. His drumming could also be subtle, unexpected and textured. He really was one of the great rock drummers.

This motorik beat propelled the music forward and it also anchored the other musician's experimental diversions. It simultaneously allowed the music to feel controlled but also expansive. His drumming became the sound of so much of what was patronisingly and arrogantly dubbed "Krautrock" by the British music press. You can hear it in the music not

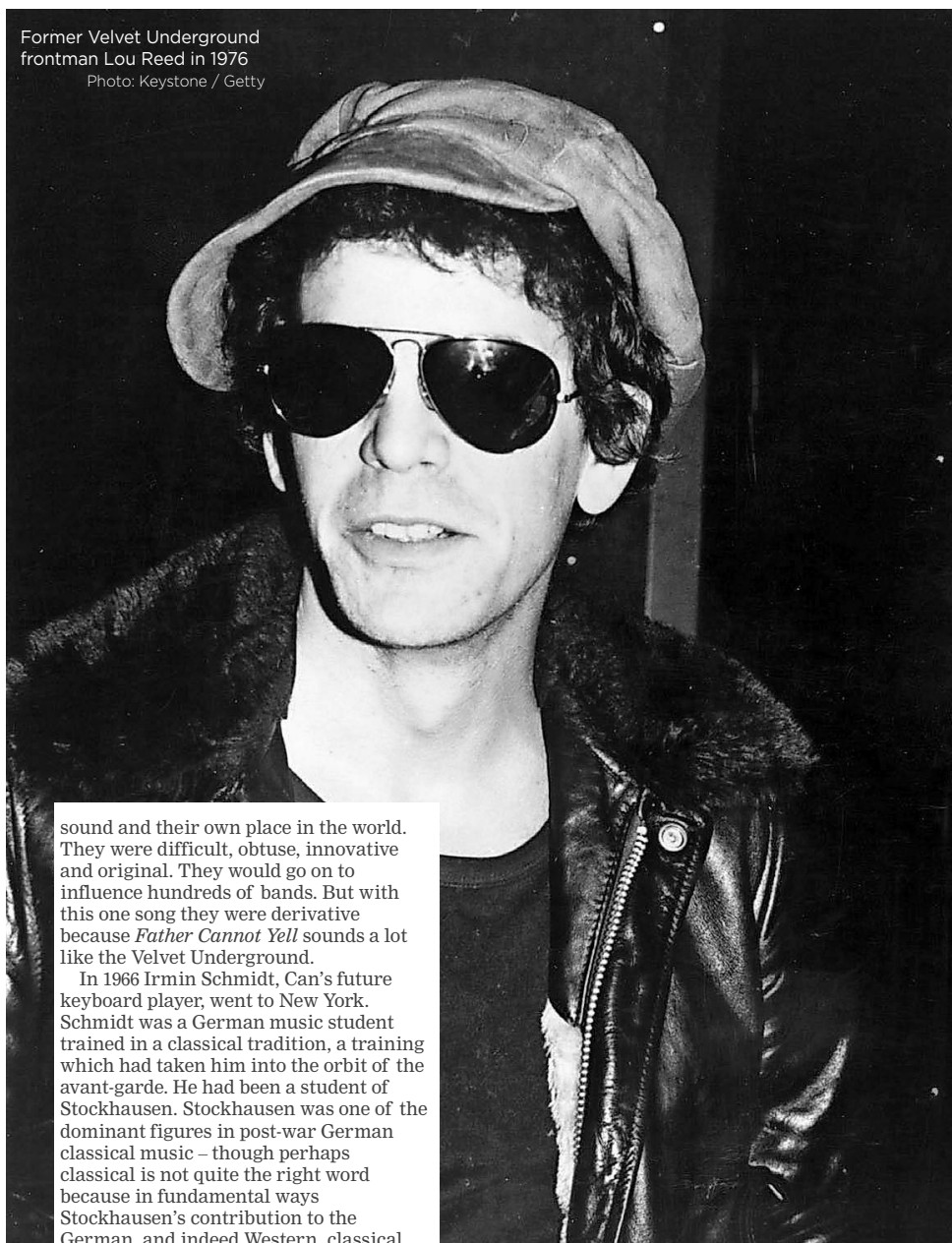
just of Can but also the in the music of the West German bands Kraftwerk and Neu!

Initially much of what Can recorded in the Schloss Nörvenich was deemed unworthy of release by record labels. It was considered too experimental and too odd (you can hear much of the stuff that was deemed unreleasable in the late 60s

GERMAN GREATS EUROFILE



Former Velvet Underground frontman Lou Reed in 1976
Photo: Keystone / Getty



sound and their own place in the world. They were difficult, obtuse, innovative and original. They would go on to influence hundreds of bands. But with this one song they were derivative because *Father Cannot Yell* sounds a lot like the Velvet Underground.

In 1966 Irmin Schmidt, Can's future keyboard player, went to New York. Schmidt was a German music student trained in a classical tradition, a training which had taken him into the orbit of the avant-garde. He had been a student of Stockhausen. Stockhausen was one of the dominant figures in post-war German classical music – though perhaps classical is not quite the right word because in fundamental ways Stockhausen's contribution to the German, and indeed Western, classical music tradition was to dismantle it. This is something he did through experimentation with electronic music,

on Can's excellent 1981 LP *Delay*). However in 1969 the band's sessions in the castle had created enough material to be able to release their first LP *Monster Movie*.

The opening track on this LP, *Father Cannot Yell*, is a brilliant piece of late-60s experimental art rock. Lyrically the song just oozes inter-generational rage. It's a song about anguish, decay, fertility and useless, silent fathers. It is a song about the German Second World War generation by that generation's children. As an opening track on a debut LP by a West German band in 1969 it is thrilling.

However, putting the subject matter to one side, this song was a false start for Can. Can were inherently experimental. In that castle they invented their own



Can performing in Hamburg, Germany, in 1977

Photo: ullsteinbild / TopFoto

with fragmentation and abstraction and also with pure experimental audacity – one of his most famous (or infamous) pieces, *The Helicopter String Quartet*, consists of musicians playing in helicopters with their instruments tuned to the pitch of the rotor blades.

Schmidt was building a career within this avant-garde classical tradition. Already as a very young man he was working as a conductor and it was natural that he would gravitate to New York.

New York, was home to John Cage (he of '4 minutes 33' seconds fame – that piece of music that was 4 minutes 33 seconds of silence) and it was also the home of the avant-garde minimalist composers Steve Reich, La Monte Young and Terry Riley, all of whom Schmidt met. But musically, probably the most important thing that happened to Irmin Schmidt while in New York was that he heard the rock band The Velvet Underground.

The Velvet Underground formed in 1965 around the partnership of Lou Reed and John Cale. Reed was a creative writing and journalism student at Syracuse University. In 1964 Reed got a job trying to write novelty hits as an in-house writer for Pickwick Records in New York. It was while there that he met John Cale.

John Cale was originally from the Welsh valleys. A gifted musician with a talent for playing the viola, Cale won a scholarship to study music at Goldsmiths. While there he gravitated toward the avant-garde and became involved in Fluxus – an international and interdisciplinary art movement which challenged all artistic assumptions. The emphasis for Fluxus artists was on the process, the act of making or becoming, rather than the finished product. Fluxus is deliberately difficult to define and the wilful desire to not be pinned down and explained could be considered the point of Fluxus. This sort of anti reason and anti-empirical thought was an attempted undoing of Western art and of Western culture – though obviously the Fluxus artists would instinctively resist such a definition.

New York was one of the centres of Fluxus and John Cale worked with John Cage and La Monte Young. In 1964 La Monte Young had formed an experimental musical group called The Theatre of Eternal Music, which was in the spirit of Fluxus. Some of the music was long, other pieces had absurd, obscurifying titles such as *Map of 49's Dream: The Two Systems of Eleven Sets of Galactic Intervals Ornamental Light-Years Tracery*. The music often involved the sustained drone of stringed instruments – which was where John Cale came in with his viola.

That sound, Cale's sustained drone of the viola, became part of the Velvet Underground sound. A man at Pickwick Records called Terry Philips assumed that because John Cale had long hair he was a rock or pop musician so he asked him to be in a band with Lou Reed to record those novelty songs that Reed wrote. The novelty pop hit career didn't pan out for Reed and Cale but what followed, that combination of Reed's descriptive slice of life (often transgressive or decadent life) lyrical story telling and an experimental musical

EUROFILE GERMAN GREATS

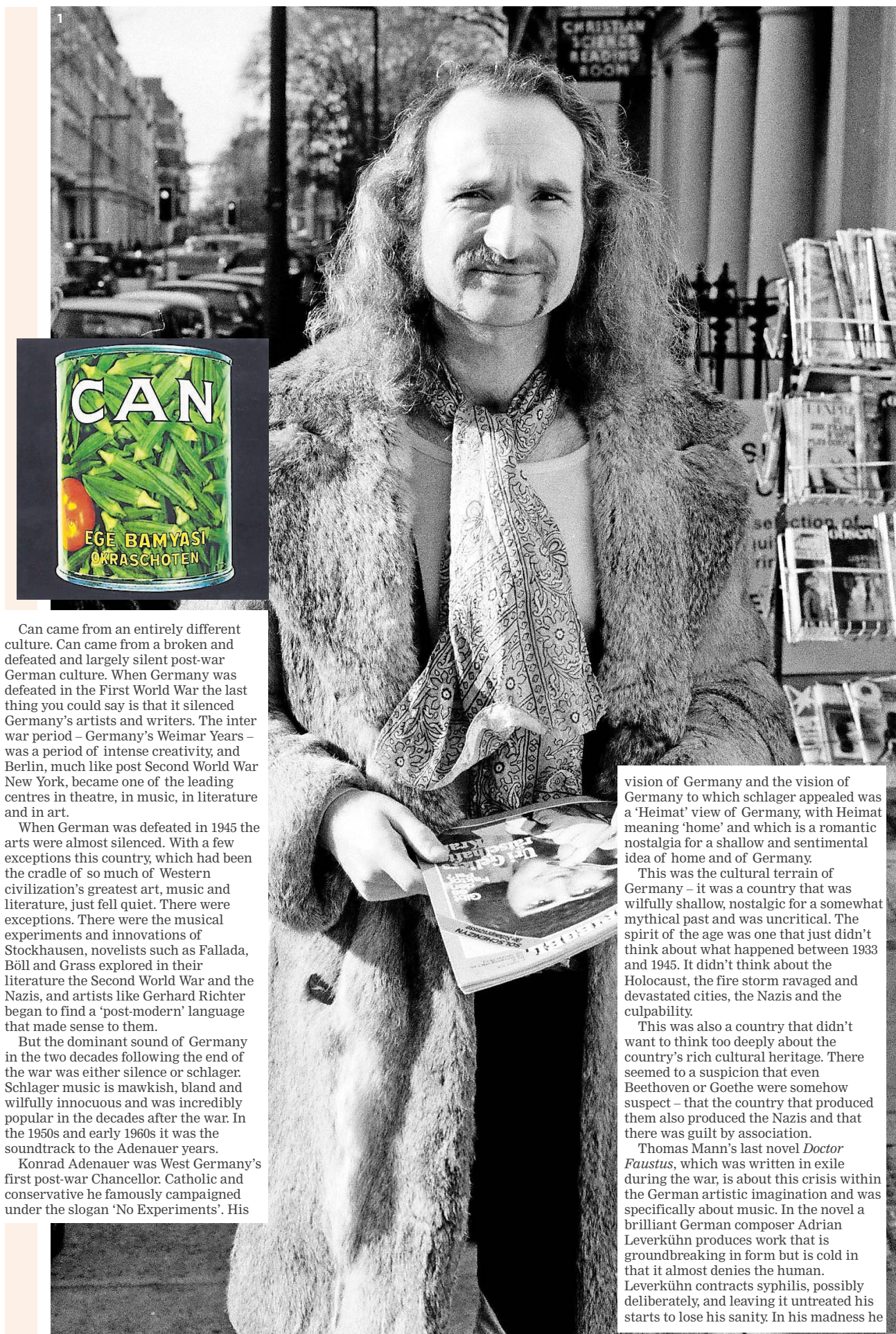
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sensibility with its discordant droning sound was the start of the Velvet Underground. Joining Reed and Cale were Reed's college friend Sterling Morrison who played the guitar and Moe Tucker who played the drums.

Moe Tucker was the sister of a friend of Reed's. Short, unassuming and looking more like a Long Island housewife than a rock star, Tucker added the last ingredient to the Velvet Underground. Her drumming style was simple, repetitive and forceful – she played standing up. Tucker did not directly influence *Liebezeit* but her 'proto-motorik' style anchored and drove much of the Velvet Underground's music in the same way as *Liebezeit*'s drumming would anchor and drive Can's music.

This line up (with the singer Nico joining them on their debut LP) would produce two LPs before Cale left. These LPs, especially their eponymous debut, changed everything in rock music. That first LP is arguably the most influential LP in all rock music. In part this was down to Reed's dark and menacing lyrics of drug abuse and transgressive sex but it was also because the LP was rooted in the traditions that came from the avant-garde in art and music. This 'art-rock' wasn't something that happened in absolute isolation – half of Britain's rock aristocracy went to art school. But the Velvet Underground were from New York – the centre of the post-war art and cultural world.

The Velvet Underground come out of New York's Lower East Side – they were managed (in a way) by Andy Warhol and were the in-house band in his studio The Factory. Pop Art, Abstract Expressionism, Drip and Action Painting, the Greenwich Village cafes, folk music, the New York Poetry School, the legacy of the Beat Writers, Minimalism, Fluxus all of these things were part of the most exciting artistic milieu of post-war New York and the Velvet Underground were part of that world.



Can came from an entirely different culture. Can came from a broken and defeated and largely silent post-war German culture. When Germany was defeated in the First World War the last thing you could say is that it silenced Germany's artists and writers. The inter war period – Germany's Weimar Years – was a period of intense creativity, and Berlin, much like post Second World War New York, became one of the leading centres in theatre, in music, in literature and in art.

When Germany was defeated in 1945 the arts were almost silenced. With a few exceptions this country, which had been the cradle of so much of Western civilization's greatest art, music and literature, just fell quiet. There were exceptions. There were the musical experiments and innovations of Stockhausen, novelists such as Fallada, Böll and Grass explored in their literature the Second World War and the Nazis, and artists like Gerhard Richter began to find a 'post-modern' language that made sense to them.

But the dominant sound of Germany in the two decades following the end of the war was either silence or schlager. Schlager music is mawkish, bland and wilfully innocuous and was incredibly popular in the decades after the war. In the 1950s and early 1960s it was the soundtrack to the Adenauer years.

Konrad Adenauer was West Germany's first post-war Chancellor. Catholic and conservative he famously campaigned under the slogan 'No Experiments'. His

vision of Germany and the vision of Germany to which schlager appealed was a 'Heimat' view of Germany, with Heimat meaning 'home' and which is a romantic nostalgia for a shallow and sentimental idea of home and of Germany.

This was the cultural terrain of Germany – it was a country that was wilfully shallow, nostalgic for a somewhat mythical past and was uncritical. The spirit of the age was one that just didn't think about what happened between 1933 and 1945. It didn't think about the Holocaust, the fire storm ravaged and devastated cities, the Nazis and the culpability.

This was also a country that didn't want to think too deeply about the country's rich cultural heritage. There seemed to a suspicion that even Beethoven or Goethe were somehow suspect – that the country that produced them also produced the Nazis and that there was guilt by association.

Thomas Mann's last novel *Doctor Faustus*, which was written in exile during the war, is about this crisis within the German artistic imagination and was specifically about music. In the novel a brilliant German composer Adrian Leverkühn produces work that is groundbreaking in form but is cold in that it almost denies the human. Leverkühn contracts syphilis, possibly deliberately, and leaving it untreated he starts to lose his sanity. In his madness he

(1) Holger Czukay, of German avant-garde rock group Can, pictured in London, January 1974 (2) Can in 1972 (3) The Velvet Underground in New York

Photos: Getty Images / ullsteinbild / TopFoto / EMPICS Entertainment

2



believes that has made a pact with the Devil that will allow him to produce his greatest work – a work that goes beyond the human.

The novel is complex and is open to various interpretations but it is a critique or an evaluation of the German artistic tradition – the idea of the genius creator, of the Goethe, the Beethoven, the Wagner. Specifically it is a critique of the Austrian composer Schoenberg whose Twelve Tone System brought an atonal element into formal or classical music in the inter war years.

In a key scene in the novel Leverkühn confronts the devil in a hallucination and argues that it is possible now to just play games with classical musical forms because classical music was now devoid of substance – devoid of the human. This 'post modern' gadding about is exactly what happened in the post war period. Much classical or formal music became purely about music – it was no longer about an ideal, or beauty or even perfect form. Music became self referential. It joked about itself.

In his brilliant study of 20th century music *The Rest is Noise*, Alex Ross points out that music being about music was not peculiar to the post-war period but there was after the War what he calls "a twitting" of audiences by composers – especially Stockhausen. But this twitting was also true of Cage and Fluxus and

free jazz. The classical and formal traditions were now just part of a game being played out at what possibly seemed at the time, especially in Germany, like the end of reason, or progress or even history.

But then the kids turned up with their rock music – well not the kids exactly, most of Can were in their 30s but these youngish men turned up and they were inclined to go beyond Stockhausen and free jazz and Cage and Fluxus and all that twitting about.

In Germany, in this wilfully shallow, schlager-drenched land, Can took art rock into new and thrilling areas. You can hear the start of this process on side two of *Monster Movie* in the song *Yoo Doo Right* – more than 20 minutes of pounding, swirling, repetitive, ebbing, flowing and very funky rhythms which were edited down from about six hours of improvisation.

Bassist Holger Czukay was primarily responsible for recording these improvisations and splicing them together, thus giving form to something improvised. Through this process of splicing Czukay found new patterns, new rhythms and new textures in the music. This does not sound like The Velvet Underground – Can had very quickly transcended that influence.

Malcolm Mooney left the band after the first LP and he was replaced by Damo Suzuki who was from Japan and who Holger Czukay and Jaki Liebezeit had

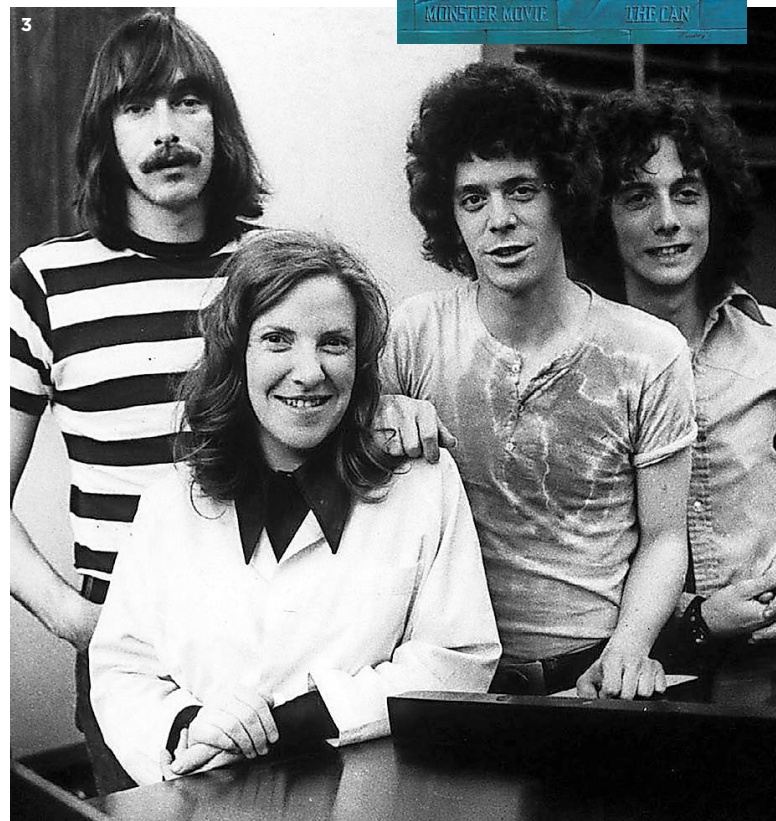
seen busking in Munich. They invited him to join Can which he did immediately. His singing was freeform and improvised – he drifted in and out of singing in English and meaning was often hard to pin down. He was a brilliant front man and a perfect fit for the band and with him Can just went from strength to strength.

When you listen to the four Can LPs which Damo Suzuki sang on – *Soundtracks*, *Tago Mago*, *Ege Bamyasi* and *Future Days* they do sound like a band with an absolute life or death commitment to invention. And this was because Can were not settling for that post-war German silence, for the stultifying charms of schlager. Nor were they settling for the played out games in formal music or jazz. Nor were they settling for the New York art scene experimentation of The Velvet Underground. Those four Can LPs with Damo Suzuki are all arguments for music and culture and imagination in a country that was horrified by its own past, that was terrified by its own culture and that was at war with imagination. Rock music had many thrilling moments but few are more exciting than what Can achieved in West Germany in the 1970s.

■ Ian Walker is a journalist and former museum curator living in Munich



3



CAN
»DELAY«
1968

EUROFILE **GERMAN** GREATS

JOOLS STONE charts Mark Reeder's role at the heart of Berlin's freewheeling spirit in the 1980s



Mancunian musician Mark Reeder arrived in Berlin in 1979 and never looked back.

In the four decades since he made the city his home he has managed bands, staged clandestine gigs behind the Iron Curtain, released his own records, remixed countless others, starred in films, presented television shows and somehow found time to run a seminal record label. It is an eventful career which has seen him become a prominent – if cult – figure in his adopted country, while leaving him less well-known in his native one.

That could change with the release of a film which compiles the highlights of his eventful first decade in the city into an immersive production which vividly captures Berlin's freewheeling spirit in the 1980s, and Reeder's place at the heart of it.

Equal parts memoir, music doc and social history, *B Movie: Lust and Sound in West Berlin 1979-1989* is no ordinary rockumentary. It's even earned a place on the German educational syllabus.

Propelled along at a rattling pace by a pulsing soundtrack and culled mostly from archive footage seamlessly woven together, it will have you booking the next flight to Berlin while wishing for a time machine. Think *Good-Bye to All That* meets *Trainspotting*.

Reeder features prominently himself, cutting a fairly eccentric figure in military garb, taking us behind the scenes of Berlin nightspots and into hairdressers which double as after-dark art galleries, picking through the rubble of a divided city yet to rebuild itself after the ravages of the Second World War, but buzzing with creative energy. He also provides the wry narration, acting as our tour guide with the outsider's eye.

Reeder was already at the epicentre of Manchester's music scene during the height of punk, working at Virgin Records and playing in a band called the Frantic Elevators alongside a certain Mick Hucknall. But a love of German imports and a sense of adventure drew him to Berlin.

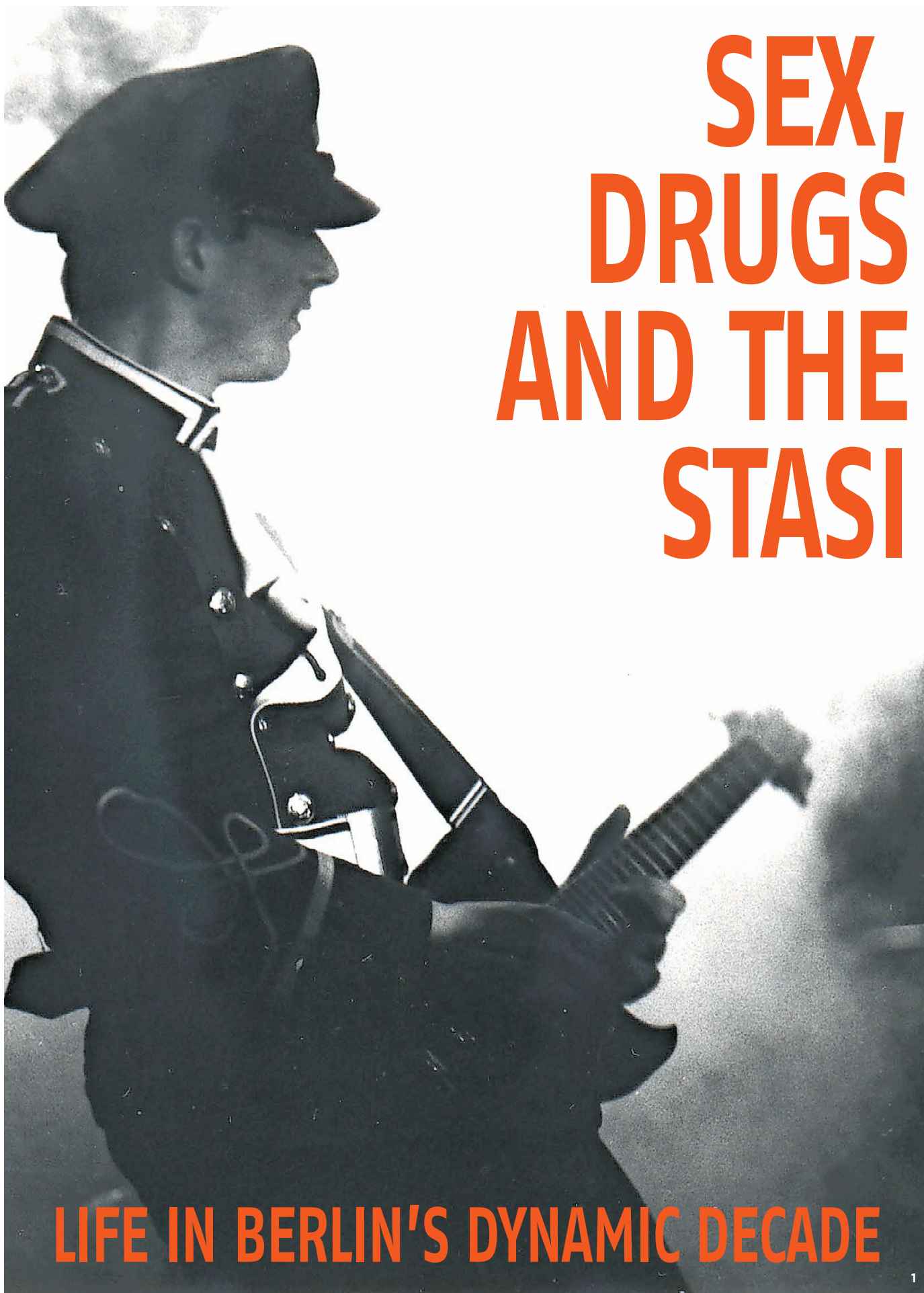
"It was such a fascinating city, unlike anywhere I'd ever been. There were no easyJet flights then – Berlin was a 26-hour road trip from Manchester, so nobody knew much about it," he says.

At the behest of Tony Wilson, Reeder found himself heading up Factory Records' German imprint.

According to Reeder: "Tony wanted me to be his man in Berlin, but he also wanted me to pay for it."

Years later Wilson confessed that – in typical fashion from the man who gave the Hacienda nightclub a catalogue number and commissioned record sleeves covered in sandpaper – he thought 'Factory Berlin' would look good on headed paper.

The Factory role was mostly a pretext for Reeder to make the city his playground, but he brought Joy Division to Berlin. The band took to the city instantly but the city didn't return the



SEX, DRUGS AND THE STASI

LIFE IN BERLIN'S DYNAMIC DECADE

favour. Only around 100 people saw their one and only Berlin show.

Reeder threw himself into the city's nightlife. Living in a high-ceilinged squat apartment without proper heating, he gravitated to clubs and bars to simply keep warm, but they were also a gateway to an entire cultural milieu which made all sorts of creative projects possible.

Frequenting legendary clubs like SO36 and Jungle Club, he met arch industrialists Einstürzende Neubauten's Blixa Bargeld, celebrity junkie Christiane F and Gudrun Gut, frontwoman of all-female electropunk band Malaria! who he ended up managing. He also met filmmaker Joerg Buttgeriet, who cast him in splatter film *Nekromantik 2*, which was mined ingeniously in *B Movie*.

All of whom you'll meet in the film, alongside cameos from a diverse cast including the likes of Tilda Swinton, Nena, Keith Haring and yes even, David Hasselhoff.

"The scene was tiny really, but in these places you'd always met the same people and you just got roped into doing these things. Berlin was like a desert island I'd washed up on and we could just do what we wanted. In a drunken drug-fuelled stupor someone would have some idea and we'd just make it happen," he says.

Reeder was originally approached by producer Joerg Hoppe to oversee the film's soundtrack. After passing over a box of old films to Hoppe, the producer realised what a goldmine he was gifted and Reeder quickly found himself at the centre of the film.

"I never gave it much thought at the time. I filmed mostly so I could remember what I'd done. With a Super 8 camera you only had two minutes of film anyway, so if the footage was ruined, you just binned it. I didn't always have my camera with me, so there are many experiences not in the film, like my time in East Germany where I couldn't film."

Reeder was deeply fascinated by East Berlin, which he memorably describes in *B Movie* as "Disneyland for depressives". He made frequent trips across the Wall, often accompanying West Berliners, helping the two sides get to know and understand each other, like some unofficial cultural exchange programme.

"Getting into East Berlin was too much hassle for Westies. If they went at all it was to sip tea with grandparents or visit concentration camps on school trips. Easties thought that everyone in the West lived this *Dynasty* life of flash cars, mansion house and designer clothes. But of course it wasn't like that."

Music played a central role in these exchanges. Reeder took Dusseldorf band Die Toten Hosen behind the Wall to play an illicit gig in March 1983, the first of many illegal gigs held in East Berlin churches, which took a lot of careful subterfuge.

"You couldn't take instruments across the Wall, so we borrowed kit from Eastern bands. The stakes were so high, if we were caught their lives would be upended. The repercussions would be immense."

One gig was disguised as a benefit for starving Romanians. 600 people came and it was shut down after 45 minutes.

"It was an act of resistance. East German authorities didn't believe that punk existed east of the Wall. Punk was



(1) Mark Reeder playing with his band Shark Vegas (2) With Joy Division in Berlin (3) Reeder channels *The Third Man* (4) Arriving in Berlin at the Brandenburg Gate



EUROFILE **GERMAN** **GREATS**

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seen as a product of the dysfunctional Capitalist West.”

Unsurprisingly Reeder soon got on the Stasi's radar. He was picked up for a lengthy interrogation at a May Day Parade, and like many Berliners he later discovered some of his friends were informants.

Not that he much cared about the attention. By the end of the 80s, in the dying days of the GDR, Reeder was running trance label MFS. The acronym officially stands for ‘Masterminded for Success’, but was a cheeky nod towards the Stasi's initials: Ministerium für Staatssicherheit or Ministry for State Security.

The label launched the careers of Paul van Dyk, Cosmic Baby and Alien Nation, laying the foundations for dance music genres which came to dominate the nineties. After years of being in bands, films and TV, Reeder found himself more comfortable behind the scenes.

“In the nineties I could hide behind the label, so the next film will have less footage of me. It'll cover the birth of techno and how that underground scene went overground, and became bastardised out of control. Hopefully it will delve into the roots of the music too,” he says.

B Movie's sequel, *E Movie*, is already in the works. Focussing on Berlin from 1989 to 1999, it promises to show how the city “went from being an island into an international capital over a decade”.

Reeder's new album *Mauerstadt* (meaning ‘walled city’) harks back to Berlin's history, while also being very much of this time.

He explains: “I couldn't vote in the Brexit referendum so I wanted to address it with this album. The real unification of Germany happened on the dancefloors, that's where east met west. The future looked so positive after the Cold War ended, nobody cared what you looked like or where you came from. But we've reverted back to this wall mentality. With Brexit and Trump's wall, it's become about divisions, instead of unity.”

Mauerstadt is an album of collaborations. Contributions from New Order and Inspiral Carpets sit alongside less well-known, international names like Ekkoes and the KVB.

There are always new frontiers and Reeder is just back from touring the film around China.

“A month earlier the Chinese government decreed that all films depicting, sex, drugs or violence were totally forbidden. I thought, have they done this just to piss me off? That's most of the film! But the reaction we got was interesting. Even some of the Communist officials enjoyed it.”

Apart from being a fantastic advert for a city captured in an exciting era of colossal change, what can the film teach us today? “I'd like the film to inspire people to push boundaries, be daring and just do stuff. Kids think you have to go to a casting show to do anything. But if they see the film maybe they'll just try something and see what happens.”

■ The *B Movie* film, book and soundtrack are available through <http://www.b-movie-der-film.de>; the *Mauerstadt* album is available at www.mauerstadt.com

■ Jools Stone is a freelance travel, music and arts writer based in Brighton



(5) Mark Reeder today (6) Still from splatter film *Necromantik 2* (7) Reeder in the 1980s Photos: Robert Rieger

Michael Schumacher celebrates his first Grand Prix victory at Spa on August 30, 1992
Photo: Bongarts/Getty Images

THE RACE THAT MADE MICHAEL

His stricken condition fuels macabre speculation, but Michael Schumacher's real legacy is the remarkable run of Grand Prix dominance which began 25 years ago this week. **ROB BURNETT** reports



The Belgian Grand Prix is among the most sacred races on the Formula 1 calendar. Nestled in the Ardennes Forest, halfway between the city of Liege and the German border, the fearsome Spa-Francorchamps track has a reputation for sorting the great from the good. Only the best win there. Jim Clark did it four times, Ayrton Senna five. One man, though, conquered it six times. And it was at Spa that his legend began, 25 years ago this week.

It was fitting that last Sunday's Belgian GP was preceded by an emotional lap of honour for Michael Schumacher, undertaken by his son Mick in his father's title-winning 1994 Benetton. Now 18 and driving in Formula 3, Mick was alongside Michael on the slopes in Meribel in December 2013 when, crossing an unsecured off-piste area, his dad fell and hit his head on a rock, setting in motion a chain of events which have seen him become the world's most shielded patient.

But then it was entirely appropriate too that Schumacher senior took the very first of his remarkable 91 Grand Prix wins at Spa. Just a year earlier he had made his F1 debut at the circuit after getting his shot at the big time in the most bizarre of circumstances. In 1991 Schumacher was a promising but largely unknown young driver in the Mercedes junior sportscar programme

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when a traffic incident at London's Hyde Park Corner changed his life – and the course of motor racing history – forever. Bertrand Gachot, driving for the fledgling Jordan Grand Prix team, got into a row with a London cab driver which ended with Gachot spraying him in the face with CS gas.

Expecting a fine when the case came to trial in August, the Frenchman was stunned when he was handed a six-month prison sentence. Suddenly team boss Eddie Jordan needed a driver at very short notice.

Schumacher's wily manager Willi Weber saw his chance, and partly thanks to an assumption that Schumacher already knew the Spa track (in fact, he had never driven it), and partly because Weber convinced Mercedes to pay cash-strapped Jordan \$150,000, he was given the nod.

The lean, fresh-faced German with the wide smile and pronounced chin turned up at Spa and stunned the paddock. In his very first competitive run in an Formula 1 car he qualified an astonishing seventh. It was the highest grid slot a Jordan car had ever achieved – and he was almost eight-tenths of a second quicker than 11-year veteran Andrea De Cesaris in the sister car. In the ultra-fast world of F1, that was a lifetime.

That his first race did not even last a full lap – his clutch blew after just a few hundred yards – did not matter. No-one had ever seen anything like it from a rookie and he instantly became the hottest property in the sport.

Come the next race at Monza, Schumacher was wearing the united colours of Benetton, having been snatched from Jordan's clutches by the Anglo-Italian team.

"Welcome to the Piranha Club," a furious Jordan was told by a rival team boss.

With highly talented engineers like Ross Brawn and Pat Symonds running the Benetton technical set-up, Schumacher found himself in F1's coming force and everyone knew stardom beckoned for him. But no-one predicted the young German would go on to redefine what it was to be a modern F1 driver – or that he would completely re-write the record books before he was finished.

Fast-forward 12 months and he was back at Spa and ready to step into the winners' circle with a performance that carried all the hallmarks of many of his finest victories.

Driving a slower car than his rivals, he used the wet/dry changeable conditions to his advantage, understanding the constantly evolving grip levels better than the rest. But there was another telling element to that first victory which offered a glimpse into how Schumacher won dozens more races than any other driver in the history of the sport.

After flying off the track and losing a position to team-mate Martin Brundle, Schumacher rejoined and noticed Brundle's wet tyres were starting to blister on the drying track. He pitted immediately to switch to dry tyres, a decision that won him the race.

"That was a clever thing of Michael to do, in the heat of the moment, having just gone off at a fast corner, at Spa, in the wet. Remarkable," Brundle said later. "It's those pivotal moments that make the



difference between being good and being great. I think that story shows the mental capacity he had – even then, in his first full F1 season – to drive an F1 car on the ragged edge and at the same time think analytically about what was going on around him."

Schumacher would use that mental capacity to devastating effect many times in his career, especially as part of his famous double act with Brawn, who not only masterminded his two world titles at Benetton, but then followed him to Ferrari where the pair turned the Prancing Horse into a relentless winning machine, taking an incredible five drivers' championships in a row.

"Michael often won races he shouldn't," Brawn says. "In 2004, for example, people thought we were cruising to the championship. But it wasn't like that. We were at the pit wall doing calculations and we had situations where we knew we were very marginal.

"We had a few races where everything



Michael Schumacher celebrates victory in the Belgian Grand Prix for Benetton-Renault at Spa on August 27, 1995
Photo: PASCAL PAVANI/AFP/Getty Images



The Ferrari team salutes Michael Schumacher's 2004 win in Bahrain.
Photo: DPA DEUTSCHE PRESS-AGENTUR/DPA/PA Images



Mick Schumacher, driving a lap of the Spa-Francorchamps circuit in his father's honour, at last weekend's Belgian GP

Photo: BENOIT DOPPAGNE/Belga/PA Images

As his exasperated rival Damon Hill once remarked after a particularly gruelling race: "He never seems to sweat, does he?"

Schumacher's approach outside the car was just as revolutionary. The great Ayrton Senna was renowned for getting the best out of his team. The German went one better: he built his own team around him and then ensured it was entirely dedicated to helping him win.

In his 10-year spell at Ferrari, he was part driver, part team manager, part motivator-in-chief – and unlike many drivers before him, he was willing to put in just as many hours as everyone else.

"F1 team people live and breathe their work, but that's not always reflected in the driver," says his former race engineer

Michael is as good as he is because he's so competitive... occasionally his competitive instincts have got the better of him, and then he doesn't think, he reacts.

had to go perfectly for us to win and they were satisfactory because everything did fall into place. That was down to Michael producing some amazing lap times when we asked him to."

As well as a level of tactical nous not seen before from a driver, Schumacher also brought an unprecedented level of fitness to F1.

"I want to be 200% physically prepared," he once said. "Even at the end of the race I want to have something in reserve; I don't want to feel tired at any point because that will affect my ability to drive the car on the limit."

His dedication forced the other drivers to reluctantly follow suit. "Michael's fitness was a pain in the ass," Grand Prix winner Gerhard Berger said. "We were all pretty fit back then because we had to be, but Michael proved that there was fit and fit; suddenly we had our teams asking why we weren't as fit as him and we all had to train more as a result. You can imagine what I thought about that!"

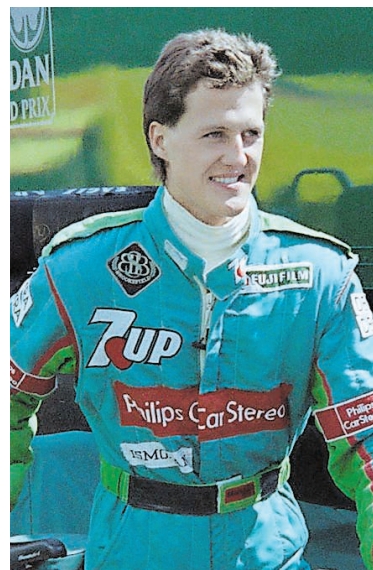
Pat Symonds. "Michael always, always put in as much as everybody else, and more."

"That lifted everyone, so we'd raise our game further. You think, I can't possibly work any harder, and somehow you just find that extra little bit."

One motivating factor for Schumacher's team was the knowledge that he would always get a result. Sometimes he went too far. Unsavoury collisions with Hill and Jacques Villeneuve, both in title-deciding races, shocked fans.

But Symonds says that was all down to his ruthless will to win. "Michael is as good as he is because he's so competitive... occasionally his competitive instincts have got the better of him, and then he doesn't think, he reacts."

Such incidents made Schumacher a pantomime villain among British F1 fans but did nothing to stem his incredible



Schumacher arrives to participate in qualifying for his first Grand Prix at Spa on August 23, 1991

Photo: AFP/Getty Images

popularity in his native Germany – a country steeped in motor racing tradition yet one without a single World Champion until Schumi came along and single-handedly created a huge fanbase for F1 in Europe's biggest economy.

"We needed him," said former F1 ringmaster Bernie Ecclestone, who was delighted when Michael burst onto the scene in 1991. "He was fast, he was young and he was German – he ticked all the boxes."

That Schumacher was the most popular driver on the planet was made plain by the outpouring of support after his 2013 accident, in the aftermath of which he spent nearly six months in a chemically-induced coma to prevent swelling to his brain which surgeons were unable to remove.

Doctors said he would have been killed had he not been wearing a helmet but even four years on, we know precious little about his condition thanks to his family's policy of absolute secrecy. "Michael's health is not a public issue, and so we will continue to make no comment in that regard," his

spokesperson Sabine Kehm has said, talking of a desire to protect the stricken champion's "intimate sphere".

Schumacher is reported to be paralysed, wheelchair-bound and to suffer from speech and memory problems, but none of these facts have been confirmed officially – and they may never be. The only thing we know for certain is that last year, some two-and-a-half years after his fall, he could not walk or even stand unaided. Those sad facts were confirmed by a family lawyer, Felix Damm, in a privacy action against German magazine *Bunte*, which had claimed a recovering Schumacher was now able to take a few steps.

After reports that a journalist dressed as a priest had tried to gain access to his hospital room in Grenoble, the seven-time world champion is now thought to be under medical care at his home near Lake Geneva. Even that sanctuary may have been breached – last December, three years on from the accident, a photograph of Schumacher apparently taken there by an unknown person was being hawked around newspapers and agencies for a seven-figure sum.

The secrecy has fuelled speculation and earlier this year Weber urged the family to "pour some wine" for fans by revealing more about their idol's condition, good or bad. Even the man who was Schumacher's closest adviser remains largely in the dark, although he revealed he remains foremost in his thoughts. "When I'm home alone and the phone rings, I often feel that it will be Michael saying 'Willi, how's it going?' Hope dies last," he said.

While his condition carries a macabre fascination for some, it is Schumacher's legacy as a driving champion which will endure. Wins, fastest laps, world championships: he holds the records for them all, and 25 years on from his first win, he is still the benchmark by which every driver in the sport measures himself.

Consider this amazing fact: between 1992 and 2004 there were only two ways to win a Formula 1 world championship: one was to be driving a car created by design genius Adrian Newey. The other was to be Michael Schumacher.

■ Rob Burnett is F1 editor of DriveTribe.com

EUROFILE MUSIC

1958

A YEAR
IN MUSIC

It was the year when rock and roll gripped the nation, prompting some to ask of a young Cliff Richard "is this boy too sexy for television?" Here **SOPHIA DEBOICK** explores when the teenager truly arrived in Britain



Teenage music fans couldn't be blamed for feeling things were in stasis in 1958.

Elvis was in a state of lockdown, in army training in Texas before shipping out to Germany in September. Crooners Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra and Perry Como were all over the charts and their female counterparts Connie Francis, Doris Day and East London's own Alma Cogan were purveyors of similarly 'easy' fare.

Pat Boone was pillaging the back catalogues of black artists and flogging rock and roll lite. The Beatles were still The Quarrymen, in the process of moving away from the short-lived skiffle craze, popularised by Lonnie Donegan, and towards rock and roll. That March, Paul McCartney bought the band its first amp and George Harrison joined. John Lennon would later proclaim "Before Elvis, there was nothing", but while budding musicians were certainly looking principally to America for inspiration at this time, 1958 was the year something home-grown would catch their attention.

When Cliff Richard, then just 17, released *Move It* that summer, it was the first real British rock and roll single, and Lennon would later say "Before Cliff and the Shadows, there had been nothing worth listening to in British music". This was the year rock and roll went British.

While his pastiche of the Presley sneer might have been a bit much, the teenage Cliff Richard had much to recommend him: an instinctive grasp of stagecraft, an engagingly studied nonchalance, and sultry eyes which he used to devastating effect. It's difficult to appreciate the impact of *Move It* with knowledge of the Cliff of the Wimbledon sing-along and the Christmas hit, but it was powerful stuff, ferociously guitar-driven and subtly sexy. While another Norrie Paramor-produced song, *Teach You to Rock* by Tony Crombie and His Rockets from two years earlier has sometimes been said to be the true first British rock and roll single, it was far too jazz-tinged and lacked the Presleyesque vocals of *Move It*.

Move It got to number 2 in the UK charts in September and, with excellent timing, television producer Jack Good launched the quaintly-titled *Oh Boy!* on ITV that same month. Good had just left the BBC's *Six-Five Special*, where he had invented the concept of the milling studio floor audience that would go on to define everything from *Top of the Pops* to *The Word*, after the corporation insisted on less music and more educational segments, rather in the vein of *Blue Peter*, also launched that year.

Oh Boy! was the first pure music youth TV programme and it put Cliff on the nation's TV sets at the prime slot of 6pm



ELVIS, CLIFF AND THE BIRTH OF BRITISH ROCK AND ROLL

(1) Elvis pictured in March 1958 (2) Cliff Richard in the same year

Photos: SIPA USA/PA Images / Getty Images

on a Saturday night almost every week between the show's launch and the end of the year. Such was his impact that the *Daily Mirror* asked "Is this boy too sexy for television?"

In October, Cliff set off on his first tour, along with his backing band The Drifters, later renamed The Shadows, and encountered a frenzied reaction from teenage fans. He had become a bona fide teen idol, and film was the obvious next

step. The following year, he took a cameo role as a good-hearted tough guy in the surprisingly dark *Serious Charge*, starring Anthony Quayle as a vicar falsely accused of sexual abuse. The film featured the

song *Living Doll*, which would become Cliff's first number one in the summer of 1959. The release of *Expresso Bongo* followed, where he starred as the world's most unconvincing bongo player, the teenage hangout coffee bar setting being very much of the time. He would have a staggering 17 top 10 hits over the next four years, including with songs by Otis Blackwell and the duo Sid Tepper and Roy Bennett (authors of *The Young Ones*) who also wrote some of Elvis' biggest hits.

Indeed, American music would remain the yardstick of excellence for some time to come. Teen idols Bobby Darin, Ricky Nelson and the Everly Brothers, rock and roll originals Jerry Lee Lewis and Buddy Holly, and guitar legends Duane Eddy and Chuck Berry (*Johnny B Goode* was released that January), were all populating the UK charts in 1958. Elvis had six top 30 hits that year and the influence of Bill Haley and His Comets, who had scored a UK number one with

MUSIC EUROFILE

2

Rock Around the Clock in 1955, and had toured the UK in 1957 (Pete Townshend, Paul McCartney and Graham Nash were among the audience members), was still being felt. Little Richard's *Good Golly Miss Molly* was at number eight in early 1958, following British top 10 hits with Long Tall Sally, Lucille and *The Girl Can't Help It* the previous year. Having established a whole new level of pomp, theatricality and virtuosity, he left the pop scene in the autumn of 1958, having decided rock and roll was the devil's music, and went off to study the Bible and immerse himself in gospel instead.

That Cliff Richard's *Living Doll* was written by Lionel Bart indicated the symbiotic relationship between popular music, the musical and variety traditions. Tommy Steele, who Bart worked with extensively, was emblematic of this; he rode the rock and roll wave while also being marketed as an all-round entertainer. Starring in his own film *The Tommy Steele Story*, the previous year, when he'd also had a number one hit with *Singing the Blues*, in 1958 he appeared in the wholesome *The Duke Wore Jeans*, another Bart project, playing his cheeky cockney self. Steele's manager was the legendary impresario Larry Parnes, who also signed Billy Fury that year. Fury penned and recorded his debut single *Maybe Tomorrow*, showcasing his trademark anguished and vulnerable vocals, which was released in early 1959. Marty Wilde, another of the Parnes stable of putative teen heartthrobs, hit the top five with the story of a drowned lover, *Endless Sleep*, that summer. Both Fury and Wilde made regular *Oh Boy!* appearances and, despite Fury's evident song-writing talent, going to write every track on his Jack Good-produced debut album, both would be pushed by Parnes into recording derivative covers of American hits, making little money in the process.

In other quarters, there was real musical innovation. The BBC's Radiophonic Workshop was established early in 1958 under Daphne Oram as its first studio manager, charged with creating sound effects and soundtracks for BBC programming. The Workshop's experimentation with musique concrète techniques, oscillators and early tape editing marked the start of a British affinity with electronic music. The Workshop's soundtrack for *Quatermass and the Pit*, which scared the nation silly when it began airing just before Christmas, was a notable project of this year. For Oram, however, the BBC wasn't pushing the boundaries far enough, and she would resign before the year was out, leaving to set up her own studio having seen the innovations in electronic sound being made on the continent. Indeed, mainland Europe seemed closer than ever in 1958, with the European Economic Community coming into being on January 1, following the previous year's Treaty of Rome.

The Munich air crash in February, killing seven members of the Manchester United team, cast a pall over the year and was a blow to the spirit of youthful invincibility seen on the music charts. In film, theatre and literature, kitchen-sink drama grappled with the contemporary struggles of the young. Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* premiered at the Theatre Royal Stratford East in May, Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* was published and John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, which had premiered in 1956 and would be made into a film starring

Richard Burton in 1959, was an ongoing sensation. The teenager had arrived. James Dean and Marlon Brando had established the standard for the young brooding rebel by the mid-1950s, the "angry young men" put such figures in the context of British class and society, and native rock and rollers' latently menacing masculinity was caught up in this web of influences. Indeed, issues of gender, class and race were squarely on the agenda.

Second-wave feminism and the pill may have been a few years off, but at the Lambeth Conference that summer, the Church of England passed a resolution supporting the use of contraception, and the Life Peerages Act allowed women to sit in the Lords for the first time. The last debutantes were presented to the Queen as even the lifestyle of the aristocracy began to change, bringing a 200-year tradition to an end. As August turned into September, Teddy Boys rioted and attacked West Indian immigrants in the Notting Hill riots, mirrored by similar trouble in Nottingham.

In the midst of nuclear tests and weapons cooperation treaties, the launch of CND in February confirmed that the atomic age was going to endure, and the first of many annual marches between the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston, Berkshire and London (a distance of 52 miles) took place at Easter, foreshadowing the youth-orientated protest movements of the 1960s and beyond.

The opening of the M1 in March, Britain's first full-length motorway, was a sign that post-war austerity was well and truly over. A rise in car ownership and the very first parking meters being installed in Mayfair in July meant the public spaces of the nation were changing and a new age of consumerism had dawned. The Hire-Purchase Act 1957 – which sought to give new protections to the buying public – came into force and the launch of Bri-Nylon, marketed as the fabric of the future, heralded the birth of disposable fashion.

Mass communication reached maturity with the first communications satellite going into orbit that December, and two months previously Pius XII, the wartime pope, had declared Saint Clare of Assisi the patron saint of television. Such gestures towards modernity would be accelerated with the election of John XXIII after Pius' death that October.

The years that immediately followed would see the kings of rock and roll dethroned. Elvis arrived back in the US in early 1960 and would not regain creative form for almost another decade. Buddy Holly was killed in the famous February 1959 plane crash that Don McLean would refer to as "the day the music died" in *American Pie*.

If that was a song about the passing of the original rock and roll generation, written with the turbulent 1960s in mind, this point in the history of British popular music was key to that shift; it was when the seeds of the British Invasion and all that followed were sown. Rock and roll becoming just rock, as it had done by the mid-1960s, involved not just the loss of its originators, but the passing of the reins across the Atlantic, and the British becoming the creators of music of unrivalled originality and energy.

■ Dr Sophia L Deboick is a historian of popular culture. Follow her @SophiaDeboick



EUROFILE FILM AND BOOKS

England Is Mine

General release, Cert 15



REVIEW

Morrissey now spends his time telling anyone who will listen how wonderful a thing the Brexit vote was. He hails Nigel Farage and George Galloway as “Liberal educators” and complains that Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London, “eats halal-butchered beings, and talks so quickly that people can’t understand him”. It is fair to say that he has rather trashed his reputation with sane people everywhere. How then can you do a Morrissey biopic today and still have a sympathetic central character?

Director Mark Gill has come up with the ingenious plan of making a film about Morrissey without Morrissey.

This is the story of the singer’s formative, teenage years in Manchester in the 1970s. It contains no songs by Morrissey and features only a few seconds of singing by the lead Jack Lowden. It describes itself as a fiction based on true events, and prominently wears the badge of ‘unofficial’ biography.

Gill is an Oscar nominated director, for his short film *The Voorman Problem* with Martin Freeman and Tom Hollander (2011). This is his first feature, shot entirely on location in the streets of Stretford and Chorlton where Morrissey grew up. While any self-respecting Remainiac would like to be able to play the man and not the ball, an honest reviewer has to say that this is a charming film about adolescent angst and what it might have meant for an artistic, talented child to leave formal education without qualifications in the late 1970s.

Steven (Jack Lowden) is a teenager crippled by shyness and who longs for another world beyond the rain and limited prospects of Britain’s provincial towns. By day he works in the records department of the Inland Revenue, by night he has his horizons broadened by friends at Manchester School of Art. He is asked, “do you have much auditing experience?” He replies dryly, “I keep a list of people I don’t like”.

In all Superhero films the story of becoming is much more interesting than the story of being. The origins of Spiderman are more fun than watching him punch people. On the same principle, Gill has decided that becoming Morrissey is more compelling than listening to his grown-up pronouncements.

Lowden is great as the nascent misanthrope poet of The Smiths and the cast around him are excellent at feeding his narcissism.

Jessica Brown Findlay is alluring and strange as a punk artist headed for London. Laurie Kynaston is a twitchy Johnny Marr; Katherine Pearce is an old friend with real-world problems, who gives up on the self-absorbed Steven. The film consists of a number of scenes in which women tell Morrissey to cheer up because he is really a genius awaiting discovery.

However, there is depression and family break-up to be gone through before Morrissey can emerge from his chrysalis. It is just a wonder how a nice boy like this ended up as Los Angeles’s foremost Brexit apologist.

Martin McQuillan

THE NOVEL HELPING SPAIN COME TO TERMS WITH ITS VIOLENT PAST

ETA’s decades of violence have cast a long shadow over Spain and the Basque Country. But, says **CAROLINE GRAY**, a brilliant and cathartic novel is helping both to move on from the past



Western Europe’s last remaining home-grown terrorist organisation finally ceased operations in 2011 when Basque separatist group ETA declared a permanent ceasefire. And yet the decades of violence continue to cast a long shadow over Basque society and political life. As politicians on both sides remain as antagonistic as ever, novelists and other writers are taking on the challenge of tackling the subject with far more eloquence and nuance, telling stories that could provide a much-needed form of remembrance, catharsis and understanding.

Fernando Aramburu’s novel *Patria* (‘Fatherland’) is a stellar example – and sets the bar high for others to follow. First published in Spanish in September 2016, it has reached a wider audience than novels on the subject written in Basque, and it has topped the bestseller lists – not only in the Basque region, but also in Spain – every month so far this year. This is the novel that Spaniards are reading on the metro or bus on their way to work and packing in their suitcases to take on holiday. Translations into several other languages are now underway, including an English edition set for publication in 2019, the author told me.

In the past decade, Spain has been coming to terms with its 20th century history of civil war and dictatorship, ever since the historical memory law of 2007 put an end to the unwritten agreement known as the “pact of forgetting” that

had facilitated the transition to democracy.

Now, Aramburu has recognised that in the wake of ETA’s permanent ceasefire, there is another story that needs to be told and remembered in a sensitive and reconciliatory fashion. This cannot be achieved by politicians fighting over how best to facilitate ETA’s disbandment and address the legacy it leaves. It must be writers and other cultural practitioners who do that.

Originally founded in 1959 in opposition to Spanish dictator Franco’s suppression of regional identities, ETA persisted with its campaign of violence well into the 21st century, long after Spain’s transition to democracy. The separatist group has not killed since 2010, but its disarmament was protracted until April this year and its full disbandment remains pending. Moreover, politicians and society remain divided over controversial issues such as the treatment of ETA prisoners, who under Spanish law have their rights reduced and are subject to policies such as dispersion.

For too long, the Basque ‘conflict’ was primarily portrayed, in a misleadingly simplistic fashion, as pitting Spain (or “the Spanish state”, as Basque nationalists put it) against the Basques. ETA itself, and the wider social and political movement linked to it, was responsible for propounding this vision to justify its existence. But sectors of the Spanish right then compounded the error by associating all Basque nationalism with ETA for their own political motives. In reality, however, one of the biggest tragedies caused by ETA is that it also pitted Basques against Basques.

Patria eloquently draws attention to this through its depiction of the impact on a typical small Basque village (which could be any one of many), focusing in particular on two once closely-knit families that are torn apart when the father of one family ends up an ETA target while the eldest son of the other joins the terrorists. It



is not only the relationship between the two families that suffers, but relations among parents and siblings within each individual family, too.

Aramburu is sensitive and sympathetic towards ETA’s victims and their families, and he conveys their suffering with tremendous poignancy. His real achievement, however, is to do so without descending into facile moralising or politicising. He shows the full complexity of the tragedy by seeing things from different perspectives.

This includes reflecting the way in which many naïve young Basques, brought up in pro-ETA towns and villages and subject to intense peer pressure, ended up buying into ETA’s ideology and somewhat unthinkingly obeying its orders.

Terrorism is unacceptable in any circumstances, but Spain’s way of dealing with it has not always been appropriate either – and Aramburu does not shy away from depicting the torture used on ETA prisoners or the violence wrought by the GAL, Spain’s covert paramilitary death squads back in the 1980s.

This is first and foremost a novel of excellent literary quality that the reader is compelled to keep reading to find out what happens to the two families and whether there is any hope of reconciliation after ETA’s reign of devastation. The novel starts with ETA’s ceasefire and then darts back and forth to different periods of time in each chapter, telling snippets of the story in a non-chronological and non-linear fashion, keeping the reader waiting until the very end to get the complete picture.

Aramburu never intended

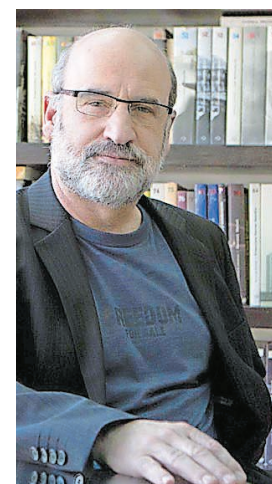


Members of the Basque armed separatist organisation ETA on March 22, 2006, announcing a permanent ceasefire.
Photo: HO/AFP/Getty Images

BOOKS **EUROFILE**

A mural painting in support of ETA (2) Writer Fernando Aramburu

Photos: RAFA RIVAS/AFP/Getty Images/ Jorge Rios Ponce/DPA/PA



for the novel to be political or didactic, but precisely for that reason, the end result can actually serve a much better purpose than most intentionally didactic novels. Propagandistic Basque novels portraying ETA terrorists as heroes or martyrs have tended to be intensely bad literature. But a brilliantly-written novel such as *Patria* provokes the reader to think and reflect without him or her necessarily realising it.

For Basque citizens, the novel provides a sensitive portrayal of their community and its recent history. Perhaps even more significant, however, is the way in which the novel can contribute to an understanding in wider Spanish society of the complex social situation in the Basque Country prior to, and in the wake of, ETA's ceasefire – something which is often quite misunderstood, due in part to Spanish politicians' simplification of issues for electoral purposes. Once translations of the novel start to appear they will promote understanding even beyond Spain's borders, while also providing a compelling read.

Through its popularity, *Patria* has far surpassed the author's own expectations. Aramburu himself has aptly described this work as escaping his creative control as it becomes a social phenomenon with a life of its own.

Spain may have been rather late in confronting the ghosts of the civil war and Franco period after years of attempting to brush them under the carpet, but lessons have been learned. *Patria* provides a healthy dose of understanding and remembrance about the Basque Country's violent past by a writer who is well aware of the need to talk of the past sensitively, all the more so when politicians remain at loggerheads.

■ Caroline Gray is a lecturer in politics and Spanish at Aston University; this article also appears at www.theconversation.com

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EUROFILE LITERATURE

Nothing screams America like a Steinbeck novel. But, as **CHARLIE CONNELLY** explains, while writing what was to be his magnum opus he decamped to the English countryside



Writers don't come much more American than John Steinbeck. Through novels such as *The Grapes Of Wrath*, *Of Mice And Men* and *East Of Eden* Steinbeck helped more than most to create a defining image of America and working class Americans in particular.

Born and raised in Salinas, California, the 1962 Nobel Prize winner gave nuance and a voice to the forgotten underbelly of the United States: the poor, oppressed and displaced, from *The Grapes of Wrath's* Tom Joad to George and Lennie in *Of Mice And Men*. Film adaptations of his books only served to emphasise this staunch American-ness by starring James Dean, Spencer Tracy and Henry Fonda.

Yet, surprising as it may sound, this man so American he could have been hewn from Sierra Nevada rock was a committed Europhile with a particular affection for England. Not only that, three years before his Nobel award he moved to a tiny cottage in rural Somerset to research and write what he hoped would be his magnum opus. It was a labour of love that nobody else seemed to love, at least not the way he did, but the period he spent living in England during 1959 was arguably the happiest of his life.

John Steinbeck was always aware of his European roots, dabbling in research about his German and Irish ancestors and, once he was established as one America's most successful novelists, he would take any opportunity he could to cross the Atlantic.

During the Second World War Steinbeck spent five months with American forces stationed in Europe, writing features for the *New York Herald Tribune* and frequently accompanying the film star Douglas Fairbanks Jr on operations in the Mediterranean with his special operations naval unit.

After the war he made a series of journeys to the Soviet Union, including an extensive 1947 tour with the famous photographer Robert Capa designed to present the human rather than political face of Russian life. Steinbeck was also a regular visitor to Scandinavia, where his books were particularly popular, from a post-war visit to Denmark during which he learned that his 1942 novel *The Moon Is Down* about a northern European town fighting back against invasion had inspired the Danish resistance during the war (he was awarded the Norwegian Freedom Cross by King Haakon VII for the same reason) to his Nobel acceptance speech in Stockholm in 1962.

Spain, Switzerland, Italy, France:

Steinbeck was a regular and enthusiastic European tourist, even publishing *The Short Reign of Pippin IV* in 1957, a satirical novella on the French politics he'd observed on his travels.

Of all the European nations it was Britain and particularly England that turned his head the most. Indeed, England could conceivably claim some of the credit for helping to create one of the greatest novelists of the 20th century.

Steinbeck had been 10 years old when his Aunt Molly had presented him with a copy of Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, the account published in 1485 of the deeds of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. To a small boy from a remote town in Californian farming country, the tales of Arthurian heroism and derring-do he read sitting under a tree in the family's back yard were a revelation, one that would become a lifelong fascination bordering on obsession. When he visited England during the 1950s Steinbeck would explore sites associated with the tales and even spent several weeks in Italy chasing a hunch that Sir Thomas Malory had once spent time there as a mercenary soldier.

By 1956 this research had garnered a focus. "Because I must go on working because I get unhappy when I'm not working I am taking on something I have always wanted to do," he wrote to friends in November of that year. "That is the reduction of Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* to simple readable prose without adding or taking away anything ... I don't know of any book save only the Bible and perhaps Shakespeare that has had more effect on our morals, our ethics and our mores than this same Malory."

There had always been strong Malorian themes in Steinbeck's work but this was an extraordinary gear change. A man best known for his affecting stories of the dignified downtrodden with dusty faces and holes in their shoes, flawed but good people swimming helplessly against the tides of 20th century American history, was about to throw all that up in favour of adapting a collection of 15th century myths from the other side of the Atlantic full of noble knights and damsels in distress. It was like Charles Dickens announcing he was working on a gunslinging western about a frontier sharpshooter called Big Tex.

So taken was he with the idea ("what should be the best work of my life, and the most satisfying") that early in 1959 while suffering from a debilitating bout of writer's block Steinbeck decided on a drastic course of action: he and his wife Elaine would move to England until he had completed what he regarded as the book he was born to write. Where better to adapt one of English literature's greatest works, he mused, than in England itself?

He contacted a playwright named Robert Bolt who he'd met on previous trips and asked him to source a suitable

I don't know of any book save only the Bible and perhaps Shakespeare that has had more effect on our morals, our ethics and our mores than this same Malory

John Steinbeck

STEINBECK IN SOMERSET



1962 Nobel Prize winner John Steinbeck
Photo: John/SvD/
SCANPIX/TT News
Agency/PA



home for their extended stay. Bolt found them a remote cottage called Discove outside the village of Bruton in Somerset, reputed to contain remnants in its brickwork of an ancient hermitage.

"It is probable that it was the hut of a religious hermit," Steinbeck wrote to his editor Pat Covici soon after their arrival in March 1959. "It is something to live in a house that has sheltered 60 generations. My little work room on the second floor overlooks hills and meadows and an old manor house but there is nothing in sight that hasn't been here since the 6th century. If ever there was a place to write the *Morte*, this is it."

There were few home comforts for the visiting Americans, no refrigerator or central heating nor indeed any plumbing to speak of, but the Steinbecks turned the old house into a home, even to the extent

(1) The Somerset levels (2) James Dean with Julie Harris in the 1955 big screen version of Steinbeck's *East of Eden*

Photos: Thinkstock/George Rinhart/Corbis via Getty Images

FIVE GREAT AMERICAN NOVELS BY WOMEN

Steinbeck, Hemingway, Mailer: American fiction can be pretty full-on blokey, dominated not just by blokes but blokes' blokes. To help counterbalance that here's a selection of some of the best American novels written by members of the other half of the population.

The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter

by Carson McCullers (Penguin Modern Classics, £7.99)

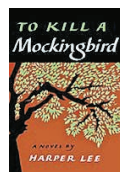
Her debut novel written when she was just 23, McCullers' book is an outstanding, moving examination of loneliness and alienation in 1930s America. John Singer, a deaf mute, finds himself a silent counsellor to a range of lost characters seeking their place in the world. One of the most deeply humane works of the 20th century.



To Kill A Mockingbird

by Harper Lee (Arrow, £6.99)

One of the greatest novels of all time, *To Kill A Mockingbird* is



a beautifully nuanced and deep reading of the irrationality of adult behaviour in an American town. Scout and Jem Finch's witnessing of their lawyer father's defence of a black man accused of raping a white woman and its effect on the locality is also one of the great evocations of childhood in literature.

The Color Purple

by Alice Walker (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £8.99)

Walker's account of Celie's spiritual journey from abused girl born into poverty, segregation and a dreadful marriage in 1930s Georgia to freedom of spirit and joy of existence thanks to meeting singer Shug Avery won her the 1983 Pulitzer Prize, the first time a black woman had ever received the award.



My Name Is Lucy Barton

by Elizabeth Strout (Penguin, £8.99)

Longlisted for the 2016 Man Booker and Baileys prizes, Strout's taut



account of a mother's visit to her hospitalised daughter in New York is destined to become an American classic. Long-buried memories of an impoverished rural childhood cause the eponymous Lucy to confront the brittle façade of her crumbling life and marriage in the big city. Beautiful.

O Pioneers!

By Willa Cather (Penguin Classics, £5.99)

Cather's classic 1913 account of a Swedish-American family settling in a fictional Nebraska town, and in particular how Alexandra Bergson copes with running the farm after the death of her father, has experienced a recent resurgence in popularity thanks to this new Penguin edition. *O Pioneers!* became the first volume of Cather's 'Great Plains Trilogy' and is a vivid and distinctly human portrayal of the struggles of rural America at the turn of the 20th century.



of growing their own herbs and vegetables in the garden.

They mixed easily with the villagers, attending cricket matches, while a visibly more cheerful John proved a dab hand at skittles in the local pub.

Elaine Steinbeck noted the change in her husband. "John's enthusiasm and excitement are authentic and wonderful to see," she wrote to a friend. "I have never known him to have such a perfect balance of excitement in work and contentment in living in the 10 years I have known him."

For the writer himself, "the whole thing is dreamlike and I like the dream. I have had enough of reality for a while. A few months of this and I will be a new person".

He flourished away from the stress and self-doubt that had dogged him since his

breakthrough novel *Tortilla Flat* had taken off nearly 25 years earlier. He'd felt unfulfilled, that his work was formulaic, that he was in a rut. For years the McCarthy hearings had loomed over him: not called himself, friends like the film director Elia Kazan and colleagues like playwright Arthur Miller found themselves in the spotlight and Steinbeck suffered from guilt by association.

All that could be forgotten at Discove. "I hear and smell and see and feel the earth and I think – nothing," he wrote. "This is the most wonderful time. Elaine sleeps later and I am alone – the largest aloneness I have ever known, mystic and wonderful."

His writer's block evaporated and he soon found himself producing what he considered to be his best work, in "a close-reined, taut, economical English,

unaccented and unlocalized". He sent the first chapters to his editors in New York and waited excitedly for their response. When it came, the reaction was decidedly lukewarm. Where his literary gatekeepers had been hoping for a vibrant tale of swashbuckling derring-do, what they found was a direct translation of the original text that even in the hands of a master like John Steinbeck lacked the verve and rhythm of the original.

Disheartened, in October the Steinbecks closed up the cottage, put their suitcases in the back of the Hillman and headed back to New York.

In literary terms the Steinbecks' stay in England was ultimately unproductive: his agent wanted another blockbuster novel and while Steinbeck had planned a decade devoted to writing his defining work the project eventually defeated him. *The Acts Of King Arthur And His Noble Knights* would be published posthumously in 1976 from the fragments he left behind, but it was a shadow of what he'd intended.

In the decade between Discove and his death in 1968 Steinbeck would write only one more novel, 1961's tale of greed and immorality at the heart of American capitalism *The Winter Of Our Discontent*.

The pressure of being one of America's highest-profile novelists left him fretting and ultimately unfulfilled, despite his literary legacy being assured. Yet for those few months in 1959 John Steinbeck, the giant, gruff, troubled Californian who gave a voice to the American voiceless, found a rare peace and contentment in the rural idyll of Somerset. So much so that on his deathbed as he and Elaine remembered their many happy years together, he said that the happiest time they'd ever spent was, "the time at Discove".

EUROFILE LANGUAGE

FROM DENIM TO TWEED, THE FABRICS NAMED AFTER PLACES

Many of the materials we use derive their names from the towns they were first made in. **PETER TRUDGILL** explores the stories behind some of the best-known



The sad city of Mosul, or what is left of it, has been very much in the news. Thousands of its inhabitants have been killed, wounded, or displaced; and there has been much anguish over the preservation of its architectural splendours.

It is not very widely recognised, though – and this will be absolutely no consolation – that the name of the city is preserved in the English language in the shape of our word for the fabric muslin. We acquired the word in the 17th century from French mousseline, which had come into French from Italian mussolo ‘muslin’, or more accurately from mussolina ‘made from muslin’. This term was derived from the name of the city where muslin was originally made, most likely in its Kurdish form Musil, though possibly also Arabic Mawsil.

Many English-language names for fabrics are derived from Middle or Far Eastern languages. Taffeta comes from Persian taftah; and the origin of cotton lies in Arabic qtn. And a number of fabric names, like muslin, come from the names of Eastern cities which were renowned for the manufacture of that particular cloth. Damask comes from Damascus. Satin may be derived, via Arabic, from Zaitun, the name of an ancient city in southern China. Calico is from Calicut, an Indian city on the coast of Kerala (known in Keralese as Kozhikode).

But there are a small number of fabrics whose English names derive from European locations. The most famous of these is perhaps denim, which is a kind of serge. (The word serge itself supposedly comes from the name of the Seres, an ancient Far Eastern people.) The source of the word denim lies in the French city of Nîmes, which the fabric was originally associated with: the material was originally known as serge de Nîmes. An edition of the London Gazette from 1703 mentions “a pair of Serge de Nim breeches”.

Another fabric for which we can claim a European place-name origin is cambric,

named after Cambrai in northeastern France – its Dutch name is Kamerijk. And lisle comes from the name of the nearby French city Lille, earlier spelt Lisle. The town was originally Dutch-speaking, and its Dutch name is Rijsel, from ter ijsel ‘at the island’. The French name had the same kind of origin: it came from l’isle, ‘the island’, hence the earlier spelling.

There’s also one well-known fabric name which has a British topographical origin. This is worsted (pronounced “woosted”), named after the Norfolk village of Worstead (pronounced in the same way), which is located to the northeast of Norwich near Aylsham and North Walsham, which were also both associated with the manufacture of this type of cloth.

It is widely believed that the name nylon was also derived in part from a British place-name. There is a story that it was created from the initial letters of New York, plus the first syllable of London – but that isn’t true. The name was invented out of the blue by the Du Pont company, which manufactured the material, with the decision being taken to have a name ending in -on on the pattern of cotton and rayon.

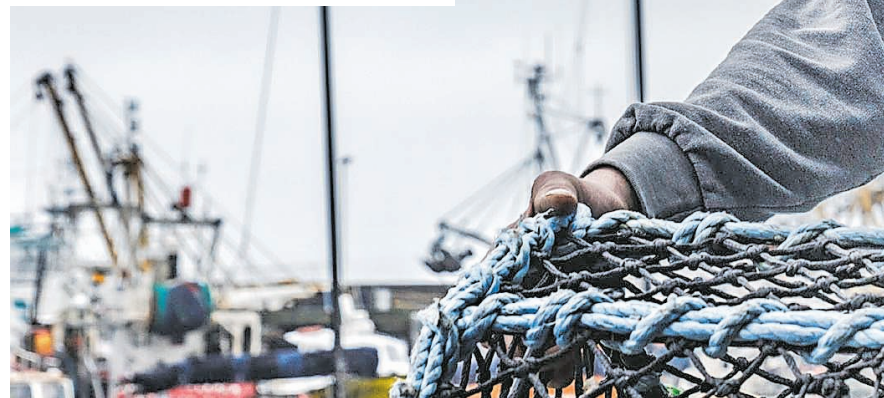
The other fabric which we might want to claim a British place-name origin for – this time Scottish rather than English – is tweed. After all, the River Tweed forms the historical boundary between Scotland and England, and tweed fabric is famously associated with Scotland. Once again, this explanation isn’t correct. A clue to this is that one of most famous cloths of this type is Harris Tweed from the Outer Hebrides which are nowhere near the River Tweed.

The truth of the matter is that the fabric name tweed was a mistake, a cross-linguistic misunderstanding. The Scots word corresponding to English twill is tweel. Some time around 1830, a London-based merchant, not being familiar with the Scots form, misread tweel as tweed, no doubt influenced by the name of the river; and put in an order for ... tweed.

TWILL

Twill is a type of woven fabric. Its name has the same ultimate origin as words like two, twelve, twenty, twice, twin and twine: twill was originally woven with a double thread. Between and betwixt also contain the same tw- element signifying duality, and so does twig, which originally referred to a branch divided into two.

CELTIC CUISINE AND THE TASTES THAT UNITE NATIONS



Celts share a fierce pride and independence that has shaped their food and drink, says **JOSH BARRIE**



There is, across westerly lands, where Europe meets the only thing separating it from the misery of Donald Trump – and his dastardly chlorinated chicken – a Celtic stretch.

It veers from Scotland southward, through the Isle of Man, Ireland, Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany.

These regions are proudly Celtic; hills left vastly untouched by Roman intrusion, and scores of other invaders thereafter. Celts are historically entwined.

It doesn’t take long to spot the similarities between Cornwall and Brittany, for example – two areas with arguably far more in common with one another than their respective nations to which they are part. This relationship is no better emulated than their seafaring pasts – communities largely built on fishing and sailing.

Look north, to Wales, the southern clutches of Ireland, and to Scotland, a country whose coastline is filled with bobbing boats, and you see the same: kilts, pipes, fish, strong beer; cider in Cornwall and Brittany; white and black puddings in Ireland and Scotland. Heady stews, such as Welsh cawl, always have potatoes.

Summer arrives and outsiders visit these isolated regions, enticed by sun and sea. It is the food and drink taken away inland come autumn. Pots of jams for grandmothers; pasties for long train journeys; fine meats from the farm shops that introduce inland dwellers to authenticity. In London, we see these things in restaurants that celebrate them. It’s romantic, sure.

“Celtic food is making use of the land and existing from season to season,” Andy Waugh, a Hebridean and owner of Mac & Wild restaurant in London, tells me.

“Living in the corners of rural Scotland isn’t easy, and certainly wasn’t any easier 400 years ago. My family gatherings are based on food, namely game. Lots has changed, but one thing hasn’t quivered – quality ingredients. As a youngster, my nan used to make jams, chutneys and sorbets from produce that was available.

“Celts, across these countries, share lots in common – from climate, to botanicals, to preserving techniques. We

FOOD EUROFILE



Aux Sabots Rouge, in Guemene, Brittany



Left, Mac & Wild owner Andy Waugh

have a sense of small community, a lack of outside influence, positive trust in strangers, making and drinking of alcohol and fine produce.

"I love my home and my whole existence around my upbringing. I think

Celtic food, earthy, rugged and wholesome, is one of the greatest cuisines in the world – too many people just don't know it yet. It's not refined. But what's not to love about stews, pies and pasties?"

And fish of course, a huge financial plus shared by all four nations. Ross Bryant, the new head chef at Corrigan's in Mayfair, London, is a Scottish chef in an Irishman's restaurant. He adds his own flourishes to the flagstones laid by Richard Corrigan.

Corrigan told me: "The Celtic nations all share a common theme: tradition. For such small areas, geographically speaking, they haul such cultural relevance and importance – and the food is a huge part of that.

"The Celts around the British Isles were known to eat salmon, mackerel and trout. Look at the countries the Celts are associated to, arguably northern Spain (Galicia) also. These places are food destinations. They cure, smoke, forage, they make and treasure butter.

"The Celts domesticated animals in Britain and Ireland such as pigs, sheep and chicken, providing both meat and eggs. They ate local plants and flowers and worshipped the elements – everything that leading chefs of the world practise and preach about today. Seasonality and local produce, the Celts worked and ate the land."

Corrigan mentioned butter – it is a common thread. Tom Simmons, a Welsh chef who's just opened a namesake restaurant in London, sees butter as a main event. He churns his with leek.

Indeed, there seems no end to cultural similarities between these nations. My knowledge is rooted in Cornwall and Brittany, two parts of the world in which I've spent so much time. Both proudly display their black and white flags, different in design but similar in essence; both boast their own languages, Kernowek and Brezhoneg. Many within the two areas support increased devolution – a liberation of sorts. Mebyon Kernow and The Breton Party passionately vie for more representation or even independence, emancipation justified by potential self-sufficiency, individuality and heritage. The Kernow-Breizh friendship is strong. It's best enjoyed over a pint of cider – a tippie enjoyed equally in the quaint pubs of Cornwall as well as over the sea in the cosy tabacs of Brittany.

When I lived in Penzance, in the far west of Cornwall, I often preceded a fillet of hake with a pint of scrumpy. And for a week or two in summer, I'd ferry over to Guemene-Sur-Scorff, where an annual

sausage festival – the fete du andouille – sees 30,000 or so flock to the tiny village to celebrate a humble sausage of innards and history. There, the dress, the music, the culinary joy and sense of pride that plays such an integral role for Celtic nations is no better showcased. It is much like the Newlyn Fish Festival on the August bank holiday.

At my favourite bar in the world, Aux Sabots Rouge in Guemene, a fillet of cod sets you back no more than 12 euros, a glass of Viognier three or four. And aside from the accompaniment of ratatouille rather than Cornish earlies, the flavour is the same – that telltale Atlantic freshness, it seems, which you can only find by the sea.

Bruce Rennie knows a thing or two about fillets of cod. He's Scottish chef with serious Celtic pedigree. He's worked, among others spots, at the Michelin-starred Shanks in Northern Ireland (now closed), and the also starred Restaurant Martin Wishart in Edinburgh. He now has his own place in Penzance, Cornwall, called The Shore.

"The Celts have a strong sense of identity and common thread through language, music, landscape and rugged coastlines. It's barren and rainy. We rely on the produce around us to inspire what we eat," he said.

"The biggest connection is seafood ... from the islands of Scotland to Ireland, Cornwall and Brittany, there is a passion for heritage which drives everything. It's the same with the booze – Calvados in Brittany, cider in the West Country, whisky and whiskey from Scotland and Ireland.

"I think too that prosperity was never a reality. Using the entire animal was important ... resulting in foods such as stews, haggis, sausages and pastry. We're lucky we get to show it off when the visitors flood in."

Summer is nearly over. Many of us will have visited one of these regions in the height of it. We're lucky to have them. They are, tellingly, testament to an ideal of togetherness across lands – British and Irish lands. Things well worth cherishing over a pint of cider and a bowl of stew.

■ Josh Barrie writes for, among others, *Country & Town House*, the *Telegraph* and the *Guardian*. Follow him on Twitter @joshbythesea

EUROFILE FOOD AND DRINK

GREAT DRINKS OF EUROPE... THIS WEEK: ABSOLUT

Vodka – The clean, clear spirit is an essential ingredient in many a classic cocktail.

And its image as the drink of purists is helped by the efforts of one of its biggest manufacturers. Sweden's Absolut is the third largest alcoholic spirit brand in the world, and second only to Smirnoff in the vodka rankings. Hailing from the very tip of Skåne County, Sweden's southern-most province, every ingredient that goes into a bottle of Absolut comes from the tiny village of Åhus.

The idyllic spot is home to the distillery where the vodka is purified; the fields where the winter wheat is grown for fermentation; and the deep well where the pristine water is drawn from. Winter wheat is sown in the autumn and harvested the following year. Its hard grains develop under layers of winter snow, and are the main ingredient, alongside water, in the production of this type of brännvin or so-called "burn wine".

The vodka contains no added sugar, and its pure taste is reflected in the iconic, simplistic packaging. In fact, the glass bottles' design, inspired by the shape of an 18th century Swedish medicine bottle, spotted in a Stockholm antique shop, is the only element that doesn't originate from the tiny medieval Skåne village.

The brand was established in 1879, by Lars Olsson Smith, who made his fortune challenging the Stockholm liquor monopoly by undercutting their prices with his own product. In 1917, the company was taken over by the Swedish government, and it was introduced to the global market in 1979. By 2008, more than 90 million litres of Absolut were being sold worldwide every year. The brand, one of the most famous spirits ever made, is now owned by the French liquor giant, Pernod Ricard, and is stocked in 126 countries around the world.

And if you're aspiring to a morning-after that won't leave you wincing with the memory of every sip, then you'll be pleased to read that the British Medical Association found vodka to be the least likely drink to leave you with a sore head. Despite the 40pc proof alcohol content, the spirit is so meticulously filtered that the body has a far easier time breaking it down, and the lack of impurities create that smooth texture and flavourless vodka taste. Absolut, with its reputation for icy, distilled purity, is a perfect example of this.

Sweden, alongside Poland, Russia, and other Scandinavian and Eastern European nations, is known as part of the "vodka-belt". And while Absolut can serve as the star of a vodka cocktail, or mixed drink, to get a real taste of Sweden, try your vodka pure and simple: straight-up and ice-cold.



Photo: Daniel Karmann/DPA/PA Images

COME OUT OF YOUR SHELL FOR AN OYSTER ODYSSEY

The aphrodisiac captures **HARDEEP SINGH KOHLI'S** heart as he recalls seafaring adventures in his youth



It was almost 35 years ago yet I still can't believe my dad let me do it. I can't have been much more than 14 years old.

I was desperate to visit my favourite cousins in Dublin and I think my parents had probably jumped at the chance to get rid of me over that Easter in 1983. And while parents today worry about teenager crossing main roads in Hampstead, Didsbury or Marchmont, that was a different age. It was less a journey and more an adventure; an Odyssey.

The easiest way to get to Dublin, the most straightforward was to travel south west from Glasgow to the beautiful Dumfries and Galloway and across to an isthmus where the town of Stranraer is to be found. From here a ferry was boarded across the Irish Sea to Larne, onward to Belfast by bus before taking a train south to Dublin.

I've always found a more pronounced romance about ferry ports; the sea excites with an immediacy somehow lacking from coach or train stations. Growing up in Glasgow the mere mention of Stranraer would conjure Emerald Isle images and excitement.

But alas some years ago the service stopped from Stranraer, moving a few miles up the coast. As is so often the case, small towns become so heavily reliant on such a constant, crucial and defining industry; there were worries that the town would struggle to find life after the ferry. Dumfries and Galloway, despite its beauty and amazing local produce is oft overlooked as a tourist destination. It's secluded beauty means that one is unlikely to discover the area unless you go there. Luckily I had been there. Quite a few times.

Instead of doom and gloom the good folk of Stranraer got their heads together and came up with the notion of the Stranraer Oyster Festival. Yum. Believed to be Scotland's first oyster festival, it marks the start of the eight-month long oyster season. This year the festival runs from Friday September 15 to 17.

Stranraer has Scotland's only native



oyster fishery and as a port town a rich tradition in all types of seafood.

I realise that unlike me, not everyone has a deep and delicious love for the oyster. While it is much vaunted as an aphrodisiac, I've seldom found a greater love than that I have for the oyster itself. I know some folk struggle with the uncooked texture but I always suggest they try, as an entry level, the cooked oyster. The classic cooked version, The Rockefeller smooths the way for the less adventurous eater. Ondine in Edinburgh serve a delicious tempura Oyster and it is that dish that has inspired my Oyster Pakora.

HARDEEP'S OYSTER PAKORA**INGREDIENTS**

- ★ A dozen fat oysters
- ★ 100g gram flour, sieved
- ★ 1 tsp of salt
- ★ 2 tsp of garam masala
- ★ 1 tsp of turmeric
- ★ 2 chillies, finely chopped
- ★ Handful of coriander stalks, chopped
- ★ 1 tsp of cumin seeds
- ★ ½ tsp of red chilli powder
- ★ Tonic water
- ★ Oil for deep frying

METHOD

Blend all the dry ingredients using the tonic water to create a tempura-style batter. This should have a dropping consistency. Cover with cling film and refrigerate for an hour. Heat the oil and test its readiness by dropping in a cube of bread. The bread should fry immediately thus showing the readiness of the oil.

Work the batter just to loosen it up and carefully dip each oyster in, covering completely while shaking off any lumps of batter. Deep fry no more than a few at a time, allowing the oil to come back up to heat between batches.



 **misterhsk**
Ondine, Edinburgh

The Fringe Festival is defined by excess. It's mostly binary, black or white but almost never grey. You either drink nothing or end up with a skinful. You're either home by 8pm and in bed by 9pm or drunk, trying to ascend the Scott Monument at 4am. And diet-wise it's just the same. A grabbed scotch pie and sausage roll lunch while rushing for a train from Glasgow across to the east is juxtaposed with the all too rare visit to arguably the finest seafood restaurant in the UK. Ondine is amazing. Defined by simplicity, renowned for excellence Roy Brett and his crack team have an unimpeachable reputation for surprising, challenging and always delicious food. Ondine embraces Edinburgh's history, reflecting the international ingredients that came in via the Leith docks applied to Scotland's world leading seafood.

The squid tempura is sublime; the roasted seafood platter requires a Herculean effort to complete; and the oyster selection second to none. Oysters have been sold on Edinburgh's Royal Mile for two centuries, yards from Ondine. And while the world is constantly changing, places like Ondine will always be a through line from our past into our present and my future.

PSYCHOLOGY OF BREXIT: POST-HOLS STRESS

By **LOUISE CHUNN**



Taken your holiday yet? That's probably a yes, as most of the world seems to be stuck with school holiday options only. Maybe politicians don't have the same limitations, but most of them have gone pretty quiet over the July-August break. Leaving the rest of us to breathe a sigh of relief and slap on the sunscreen.

But, now that you're back, are you still feeling the post-holiday benefits? That's the key question. We tend to believe holidays are good for us in a variety of ways. Professor of marketing and tourism at Nottingham Business School Scott McCabe lists personal benefits as including "rest and recuperation from work; provision of new experiences leading to a broadening of horizons and the opportunity for learning and intercultural communication; promotion of peace and understanding; personal and social development; visiting friends and relatives; religious pilgrimage and health; and, subjective wellbeing".

But research shows these benefits don't actually stick around for long. Jeroen Nawijn from Erasmus University in Rotterdam studied 1,530 Dutch adults, 974 of whom took a holiday during the study period. He wanted to see the difference in happiness between those going on holiday and those who weren't, and look into whether the length of holiday correlates to the length of time staying happy.

Those who were looking forward to their holidays were happier than those who had nothing planned, but once they were back, the difference was slight, unless the time off was very relaxing, in which case the slightly increased happiness was particularly noticeable in the first two weeks back. But after eight weeks, it had disappeared for everyone. According to Nawijn this is because most holidaymakers go straight back to full-on work, answering every last email that they've missed, and making up for their absence – erasing the relaxation and replacing it with full-on stress.

Psychologists at the University of Granada created the term 'Post-Holiday Syndrome' to describe the trauma that some poor souls feel about having to come back to work again. What to do? One option is to go on holiday again. Take more holidays, for shorter periods. According to Nawijn's research the length of holiday does not make much difference to the happiness levels, so going more frequently for shorter times could be an answer.

It's also worth remembering that some things happen during holiday breaks that can't be measured by happiness indexes.

■ Louise Chunn is the founder of find a therapist platform welldoing.org

EUROFILE PUZZLES

a poem for europe



MORELLE SMITH has published several books, both poetry and prose, and *Home in Transit* is from her latest poetry collection *Shaping the Water Path* (published by diehard, Callander 2017). She has performed in the UK and other European countries including France, Switzerland, Kosovo, Bulgaria and Ukraine, where she received the Audience Award at the Terra Poetica Festival in Kyiv in 2014. Her blog is <https://rivertrain.blogspot.co.uk>

HOME IN TRANSIT

I know the time of every train that comes in here, the 10.30 from Belgrade, the 12.05 to Budapest – says Josip. He sits beside me on the bench – thick greying hair, worn leather jacket and a smile of welcome. Drawn to this energy of transit, these arrivals and departures, his smile of greeting warms, just like this spring sunlight that drifts on the still air on the station platform at Zagreb.

The map he draws for me is miniature as if he isn't used to claiming space. In Trieste, he begins – and pauses – this hotel is friendly, inexpensive – tell them Josip recommended it to you, I stayed there with a Czech lady two years ago, or maybe three –

I ask him if he lives in Zagreb. I come from Bosnia he says. If I can find work that's where I live. They let me stay here – he gestures along the platform and my eye falls on the empty train track stretching in the morning sun, and a small shack, tin roof, patched-up boards with plastic stretched across the gaps.

He hands me the tiny map as the Trieste train approaches. Remember, he says – the Hotel Alabarda, tell them Josip sent you. Remember – you live only once, take the good things that life offers you, you know? He puts my rucksack on the train for me, then smiles and waves goodbye.

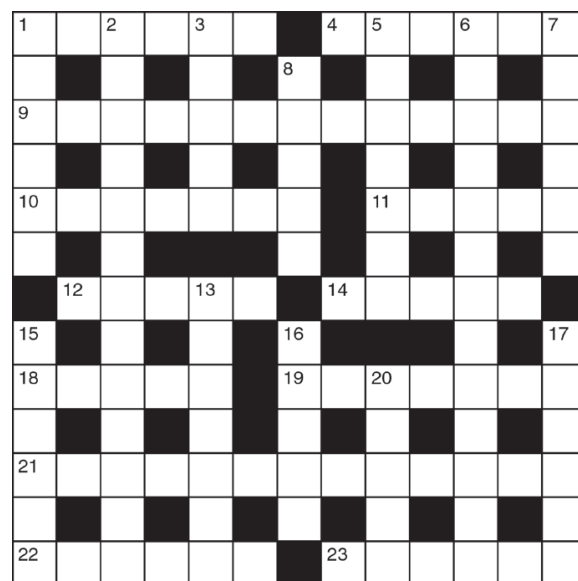
Cryptic Crossword

Across

1. It seldom goes down well nowadays (6)
4. Talk nonsense about what gets battered (6)
9. An attractive device in current use (13)
10. Rage can lead to slaughter (7)
11. Where the fighting takes place in warfare, naturally (5)
12. They indicate increased business activity in yachting equipment (5)
14. In fact, a long claw (5)
18. Graduate to study Shakespearean contemporary (5)
19. Trains a redeployed workman (7)
21. Where holidaymakers go by water (7,6)
22. Sends a different number of limousines (6)
23. A fellow is associated with Venus (6)

Down

1. Opening part of the gun, it's said (6)
2. A fruitful place for Chekhov's work (6,7)
3. Additional ten to be found in revised rate (5)
5. Montgomery provides it with capital (7)
6. It's derisively pointed (6,2,5)
7. Fuddled parent to get in gin (6)
8. He fights for a dog (5)
13. Simon is moving round an impressive building (7)
15. Seaman has recourse to corrupt practices (6)
16. A gesticulator to show indecision (5)
17. Links up with army groups round the East (6)
20. Kind of mill to deal with the grapes (5)



Sudoku – medium

	9			8			7	
			7	1		4	5	
6				7				9
4				9		2		1
	1	3					2	9
7				8		1		4
8							1	3
			1	2		8	9	
	7				1			8

Sudoku – hard

				8	3			7	
		5	7						8
		3			5	4			
6			3						
2			5					4	3
								6	1
					5	9		4	
5							7	2	
	2				6	8			

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Crossword solution

Across:
1 Bucket; 4 Waffle; 9 Electromagnet; 10 Carnage; 11 Arena; 12 Booms; 14 Talon; 18 Bacon; 19 Artisan; 21 Seaside resort; 22 Sedans; 23 Adonis.
Down:
1 Breach; 2 Cherry orchard; 3 Extra; 5 Alabama; 6 Finger of scorn; 7 Entrap; 8 Boxer; 13 Mansion; 15 Abuses; 16 Waver; 17 Unites; 20 Tread.

Sudoku solutions

Medium

1	9	5	3	8	6	4	7	2
2	8	7	1	9	4	5	3	6
6	3	4	7	2	5	8	1	9
4	6	8	9	3	2	7	5	1
5	1	3	6	4	7	2	9	8
7	2	9	8	5	1	3	6	4
8	4	6	5	7	9	1	2	3
3	5	1	2	6	8	9	4	7
9	7	2	4	1	3	6	8	5

Hard

1	9	2	8	3	6	5	7	4
4	5	7	1	9	2	3	6	8
8	3	6	5	4	7	9	1	2
6	1	3	9	8	4	2	5	7
2	8	5	6	7	1	4	9	3
7	4	9	3	2	5	6	8	1
3	7	1	2	5	9	8	4	6
5	6	8	4	1	3	7	2	9
9	2	4	7	6	8	1	3	5

A poem for Europe is edited by Briony Bax, Poetry Editor. Submit your poems to poetryeditor@theneweuropean.co.uk

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#17

GEORGES
SIMENON

WRITER, FEBRUARY 3, 1903 – SEPTEMBER 4, 1989

Late one chilly morning in 1929 Georges Simenon sat back in his chair in a small café in Delfzijl, a small town on the Dutch coast, puffed on his pipe and let the schnapps warm him from within.

The 26-year-old was living on his brand new 35ft cutter, the *Ostrogoth*, chugging around the waterways of France and the Low Countries and had entered the café to force some of the cold from his bones while his boat sat in dry dock undergoing a noisy recaulking.

With each shot he descended further into a relaxed haze, gradually forgetting about the chill and the cold metal keys of the typewriter waiting for him in the draughty, abandoned barge he'd adopted temporarily as a quiet refuge on the other side of the towpath.

"Had I drunk one, two or even three little glasses of schnapps and bitters?" he asked himself later. "In any case, after an hour, feeling rather sleepy, I began to see the powerful and imposing bulk of a gentleman emerging who, it seemed to me, would make an acceptable detective-inspector."

As he half-dozed on the hard wooden chair more aspects of the policeman came looming up from the wispy caverns of his imagination. A pipe. A bowler hat. An overcoat with a fur collar.

As Simenon told it, by the time the author roused himself from his boozy reverie Inspector Jules Maigret of the Paris Police Judiciaire was almost fully formed. The author barely noticed the icy blast as he pushed his way heavily through the door and lumbered towards the boat he'd commandeered, but when the chill penetrated the schnapps-induced glow he immediately devised a good, hot, coal-fired stove for Maigret's office.

The creation that came to Simenon that morning would cement the writer's fame, fortune and legacy. Indeed Maigret would feature in nearly 80 books over the next four decades, although remarkably they'd make up only a small portion of Simenon's total literary output. There's no official figure as in his early days he churned out potboilers under many pseudonyms – 17 have been identified, there are probably more – but estimates vary between 400 and 800 different titles.

Maigret was his biggest seller by far, however; and of the 500 million or more book sales attributed to Simenon the Maigret novels account for most of them (not to mention more than 50 film adaptations and numerous television interpretations).

"My publisher thought the first Maigret would be a flop," Simenon said. "He complained there was no problem, no plot, no love interest. The characters were not divided into good and bad and it had an unhappy ending."

The faults his publisher found with that first volume turned out to be major strengths that lift the Maigret series way



above the ranks of the simple whodunit. Indeed, in some of the books identifying the criminal is almost a side issue to Maigret's deconstruction of the human condition.

Written with a sparse vocabulary (in the whole series Simenon uses barely 2,000 words) in a style pared back to the practically taciturn, the Maigret books were always short, designed to be read in one sitting. This gave them a false air of simplicity when Simenon was producing existential analyses of human nature wrapped in the premise of a detective story.

"I focus on certain human mechanisms," he said. "Not on grand passions, not on questions of ethics or morality, only to study the minor machinery which may appear secondary."

Simenon's characters were always highly fallible. They would live good, quiet, ordinary lives until some major event – an inheritance, an accident – would disrupt everything and lead inevitably to the commission of a crime. For Simenon humans were impulsive and instinctive, barely responsible for their actions, and in his world society was always a whisker from complete breakdown.

The roots of this world view lie in the Belgium in which Simenon, the son of a middle-class insurance agent from Liege,

grew up. German troops overran the country in 1914 when Simenon was barely nine years old and the realities of occupation helped forge his view of humanity. He used to tell of the day his family were forced to hide in a cellar as German troops rounded up 200 townspeople and had them shot.

If that was exceptional, the everyday was just as traumatic.

"Under occupation your overwhelming concern is with what you will eat," he concluded after growing up among humanity at its most raw: desperate, hungry and prepared to betray friends and family just to survive.

"I don't believe in heroes," he told an interviewer during the 1960s. "Heroic deeds are pure chance. When I was a boy I rescued my younger brother from drowning when the Meuse flooded. Every yard further I swam I thought, if I don't catch him in the next yard I'm turning back. It was pure chance I did not."

This fraught early existence in which split-second chance governed life and death may explain why Simenon would live in more than 50 homes during his lifetime, from Paris to a small town in Connecticut and most places in between, permanently on the move, belonging to nowhere.

"It must be great to be part of a group, a nation, a class," he said of this rootlessness. "It would give you a feeling of superiority, because when you are alone you are not superior to anyone."

His rootlessness also extended to relationships. Famously Simenon once boasted in an interview that he had slept with 10,000 women (his second wife sniffed, "it's more like 1,200 actually"), including Josephine Baker, the Paris icon whom he claimed he could have married but for the risk of just becoming 'Monsieur Baker'. His sexual encounters were notoriously brief, during which he never removed his clothes, as if the collapse of society he expected could arrive at any moment in an existential coitus interruptus.

He worked quickly too, turning a novel round from start to finish in eight or nine days. It was always a huge physical and mental effort that left him vomiting and exhausted afterwards and, in later life,

being checked out by his doctor before holing up with his sharpened pencils.

"Writing is not a profession," he'd lament, "but a vocation of unhappiness."

Simenon was convinced for most of his career that his monumental efforts would secure him the Nobel Prize for Literature. In 1937 he said it would be within a decade. Ten years later his friend and one of his strongest literary advocates André Gide won. Ten years after that, in 1957, another friend Albert Camus was awarded the prize, news that made Simenon so angry he hit his wife.

In 1973, the year he turned 70, he announced suddenly that he was giving up writing fiction. He'd been struggling with a novel and decided apparently on a whim that rather than keep wrestling with it he'd down tools altogether. Not only that he looked back on his prolific career and wondered, "So many hours, so many pages. Why?"

Living in Lausanne, Switzerland, he took to sitting outside his apartment watching the doves and finches pecking at the bird seed he'd spread at the foot of the 250-year-old cedar tree in his garden. It was where he'd placed the ashes of his daughter Marie-Jo, who shot herself after a long battle with mental illness at the age of 25 in 1978 and, when he died in 1989, he would join her there, the rootless man spread among roots.

His greatest creation, Inspector Maigret, was an enigma. We learn little about his background beyond a few sketchy details in *Peter the Latvian*, the first Maigret novel. He's the son of a gamekeeper from the Loire Valley, he's 45 and once planned to be a doctor. In the entire range of nearly 80 books we learn nothing of his views on politics, religion or philosophy, he just observes. He doesn't solve the case, there are no deductions, he simply works out the people involved.

It's those huge gaps in his character that allow us to project ourselves onto Maigret. He's an observer; at once at the centre of things and at the same time melting into the background, a sketched outline for us to complete. As Maigret observes the *dramatis personae* of a case he holds a mirror up to us.

"My method is not to have a method," the detective tells a police colleague in one book. "It's a question of atmosphere, of faces."

That is exactly how Simenon wrote the books – the characters and locations would materialise in his mind and he'd start writing until he stopped. The plot would sort itself out.

In Maigret's Memoirs, the writer and character argue about the nature of truth.

"Truth never seems true," Simenon informs his most famous creation. "The whole problem is to make something more real than life. Well, I've done that. I've made you more real than life."

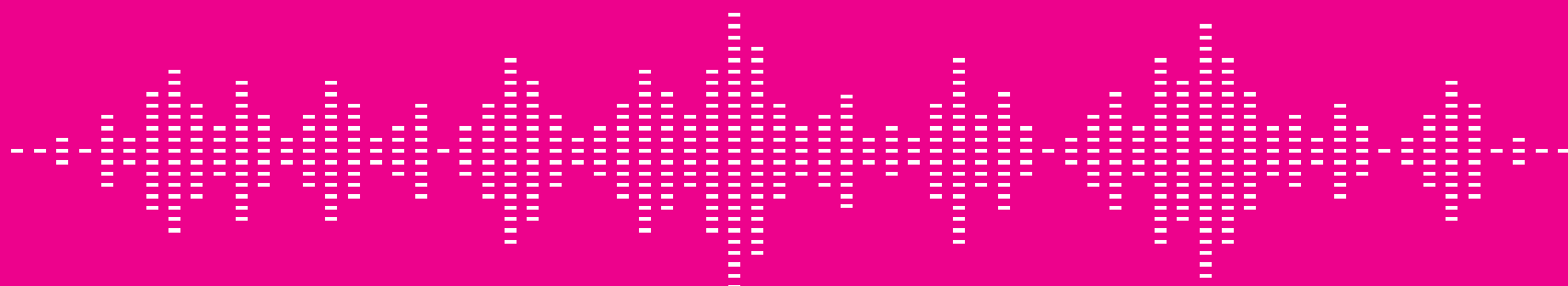
“For Simenon humans were impulsive and instinctive, barely responsible for their actions, and in his world society was always a whisker from complete breakdown

Writer Georges Simenon pictured around 1965.

Photo: Imagno/Getty Images

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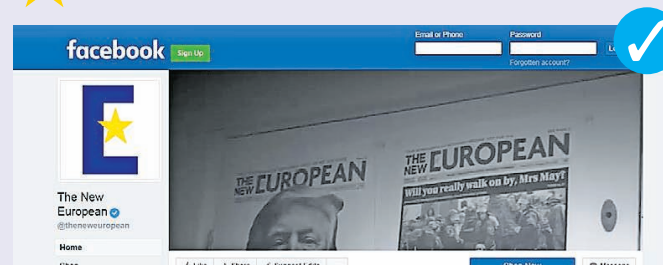
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